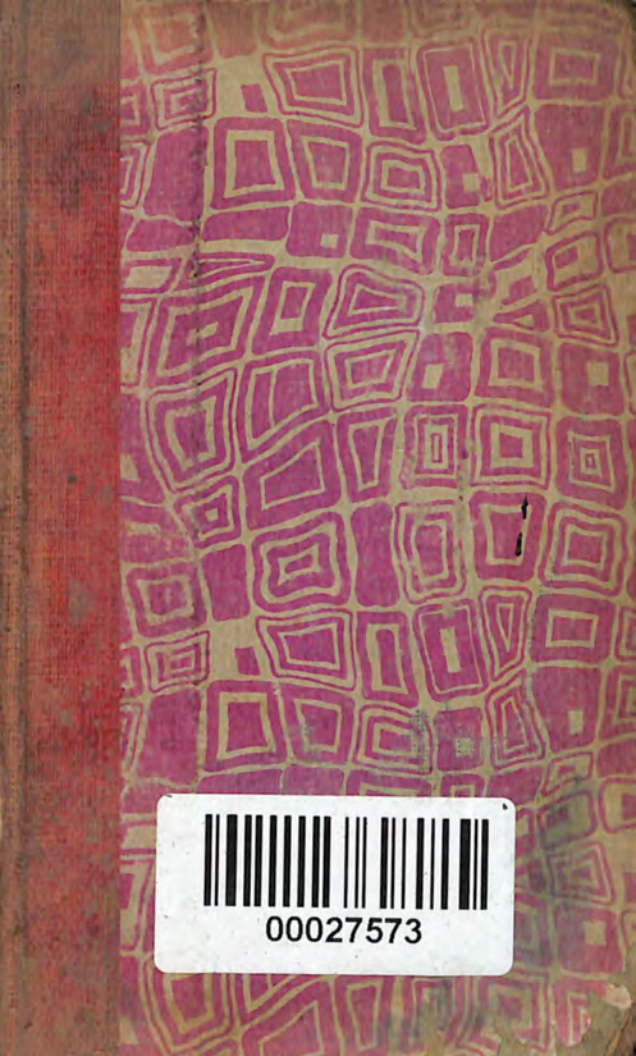
00027573

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-1.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

POLITICAL ECONOMY.

BY 27573

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

AP 12-L : 22

A MANCHESTER STRIKE.

COUSIN MARSHALL.

IRELAND.

—o—

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

—o—

LONDON:

CHARLES FOX, PATERNOSTER-ROW

MDCCCXXXIV.

27573

00027573

CONTENTS.

A MANCHESTER STRIKE.

CHAP.		PAGE
1.	The Week's end .	1
2.	Child's Gossip . .	16
3.	No Union of Masters	23
4.	Union of Men . .	40
5.	No Progress made .	55
6.	Night and Morning	63
7.	A Committee . .	72
8.	A Tête-à-tête . .	84
9.	A Public Meeting .	91
10.	Hope declining . .	108
11.	Final Deliberation	118
12.	Hope extinct . .	126

COUSIN MARSHALL.

1.	A very Hot Morning	1
2.	An Interior . .	15
3.	Tea and Talk . .	32
4.	Pauper Life . .	53
5.	Cousin Marshall's Charities . . .	73
6.	Parish Charities .	82
7.	What comes of Parish Charities? .	90
8.	What is Charity? .	108
9.	Cousin Marshall's end	124

IRELAND.

1.	Irish Economy . .	1
2.	Irish Liabilities .	15
3.	Irish Adventure .	34
4.	Irish Crime . .	61
5.	Irish Retribution .	74
6.	Irish Responsibility	91
7.	Irish Impolicy . .	104
8.	Irish Fatality . .	119
9.	Irish Disaffection .	127

A

MANCHESTER STRIKE.

Chapter I.

THE WEEK'S END.

One fine Saturday evening in May, 18—, several hundred work-people, men, girls, and boys, poured out from the gates of a factory which stood on the banks of the Medlock, near Manchester. The children dispersed in troops, some to play, but the greater number to reach home with all speed, as if they were afraid of the sunshine that checquered the street and reddened the gables and chimnies.

The men seemed in no such haste; they lingered about the factory, one large group standing before the gates, and smaller knots occupying the street for some distance, while a few proceeded slowly on their way home, chatting with one or another party as they went. One only appeared to have nothing to say to his companions, and to wish to get away quietly, if they would have let him. He was one of the most

respectable looking among them, decent in his dress, and intelligent though somewhat melancholy in countenance. He was making his way without speaking to anybody, when first one and then another caught him by the button and detained him in consultation. All seemed anxious to know what Allen had to relate or to advise; and Allen had some difficulty in getting leave to go home, much as he knew he was wanted there. When he had at length escaped, he walked so rapidly as presently to overtake his little daughter, Martha, who had left the factory somewhat earlier. He saw her before him for some distance, and observed how she limped, and how feebly she made her way along the street, (if such it might be called,) which led to their abode. It was far from easy walking to the strongest. There were heaps of rubbish, pools of muddy water, stones and brickbats lying about, and cabbage-leaves on which the unwary might slip, and bones over which pigs were grunting and curs snarling and fighting. Little Martha, a delicate child of eight years old, tried to avoid all these obstacles; but she nearly slipped down several times, and started when the dogs came near her, and shivered every time the mild spring breeze blew in her face.

"Martha, how lame you are to-day!" said Allen, taking her round the waist to help her onward.

"O father, my knees have been aching so all day, I thought I should have dropped every moment."

"And one would think it was Christmas by your looks, child, instead of a bright May day."

"It is very chill after the factory," said the little girl, her teeth still chattering. "Sure the weather must have changed, father."

No; the wind was south, and the sky cloudless. It was only that the thermometer had stood at 75° within the factory.

"I suppose your wages are lowered as well as mine," said Allen; "how much do you bring home this week?"

"Only three shillings, father; and some say it will be less before long. I am afraid mother—"

The weak-spirited child could not say what it was that she feared, being choked by her tears.

"Come, Martha, cheer up," said her father. 'Mother knows that you get sometimes more and sometimes less; and, after all, you earn as much as a piecer as some do at the hand-loom. There is Field, our neighbour; he and his wife together do not earn more than seven shillings a week, you know, and think how much older and stronger they are than you! We must make you stronger, Martha. I will go with you to Mr. Dawson, and he will find out what is the matter with your knees."

By this time they had reached the foot of the stairs which led up to their two rooms in the third story of a large dwelling which was occupied by many poor families. Barefooted children were scampering up and down these stairs at play; girls nursing babies sat at various elevations, and seemed in danger of being kicked

down as often as a drunken man or an angry woman should want to pass; a thing which frequently happened. Little Martha looked up the steep stairs and sighed. Her father lifted and carried her. The noises would have stunned a stranger, and they seemed louder than usual to accustomed ears. Martha's little dog came barking and jumping up as soon as he saw her, and this set several babies crying; the shrill piping of a bulfinch was heard in the din, and over all, the voice of a scolding woman.

"That is Sally Field's voice if it is anybody's," said Allen. "It is enough to make one shift one's quarters to have that woman within hearing."

"She is in our rooms, father. I am sure the noise is there; and see, her door is open and her room empty."

"She need not fear leaving her door open," observed a neighbour in passing. "There is nothing there that anybody would wish to carry away."

Allen did not answer, but made haste to restore peace in his own dwelling, knowing that his wife was far from being a match for Sally Field. As he flung open the door, the weaker party seemed to resign the contest to him; his wife sank into a chair, trembling all over. Her four or five little ones had hidden themselves where they could, some under the table, some behind the bed, having all been slapped or pushed or buffeted by Sally for staring at her with their thumbs in their mouths. She was not aware that Sally Field in a passion was a sight to make any one stare.

Allen carried Martha to a seat in preparation for turning out Sally Field and locking the door upon her, which he meant to do by main force if gentler means should fail. Her surprise at seeing him, however, and perhaps some degree of awe of his determined countenance, made her pause for a moment.

"What is all this, wife?" inquired Allen.

"I am sure I don't know. Sally has been rating me and the children this hour past, and heaven knows what for."

Sally proceeded upon this to declare a long list of offences of which Allen's family had been guilty towards her, and Allen suffered her to go on till she had exhausted her breath. When at length she lost her voice—a catastrophe which happens sooner or later to all scolds,—he took up the word.

"I'll tell you what, Sally," said he; "I am very sorry for you, and very much ashamed of you, and I should be more angry on my wife's account than you ever saw me if I did not know you well, and understand what is at the bottom of all this. Remember, Sally, I have known you and your husband since you were this high, as well as if you had been children of my own. Don't put me in mind how young you are. Don't make me treat you like a child when you have taken upon you so early to be a woman. Don't make me call your husband to take care of you as if you could not take care of yourself."

"Call him! call him and welcome, if you

can find him," cried Sally. "Show me where he is, and I'll find a better use for my tongue than in scolding your mean-spirited wife there that looks as if she were going to die whenever one speaks. Go, pray, call my husband."

"Aye, aye; that's the grievance, I see," said Allen. "We all have our grievances, Sally, and it is great folly to make them worse of our own accord. Do you expect to tempt your husband to stay at home with you by scolding as you were doing just now?"

"Do you leave your wife for the twenty-four hours together?" cried Sally. "Do you make yourself drunk with your last shilling?—and yet any man had rather see his wife in a passion now and then than have her such a poor, puny, crying creature as your wife is."

"Hush, hush, mistress!" interrupted Allen. "I will lock the door upon you this moment, and would have done it before but that you would raise a mob in the street if I turned you out. Sally, you know you have not a friend in the world if you quarrel with us, and what will you do with your sore heart then?"

The poor creature's passion now dissolved in tears. She threw herself on the bed and sobbed bitterly. She was left to herself for some time. Allen produced his week's wages, and settled with his wife how they should be disposed of, and persuaded her to go out herself and make the necessary purchases, saying that he would search for Field and try to get him home. Allen's wife sighed,

"You are not afraid to trust me in an ale-house?" said he smiling.

"Bless your heart, no; that I never was nor ever shall be: but I was thinking of what you said, that we all have our grievances. Here is three shillings less wages this week."

"Yes, and another sixpence off Martha's too: but don't fret, wife; we must do as others do, and be glad if nothing worse happens. See to poor Martha's knees before you go out; she is more lame than ever to-day.—And now, Sally, if you will promise me to go to your own room, and stay there till I bring your husband back, and if you will give me your word to keep the peace with him whatever he may have been doing, I will go and search him out, and see what I can do to make him behave better to you."

Sally promised to keep the peace, but begged to stay and take care of the children till their mother should return. Seeing however that Martha looked up beseechingly in her father's face, and that the little ones clung to their mother's apron, she cursed herself for having deserved that they should be afraid of her, and ran down to bolt herself into her own room and recover her composure as she might.

As there was no fire, and as Martha was very discreet for her years, the parents promised the children to lock them up, that no scold might come and terrify them while they had to take care of themselves. Martha was advised to sit still, and her bulfinch was taken down from the window and placed beside her to be fed and watered; the other little things promised to be

good, and their father and mother went, the one to the Spread-Eagle and the other to the market.

It required no great sagacity to prophesy that Field would be found at the Spread-Eagle. He varied his excursions a little, according to times and seasons: but those who knew his ways could easily guess at which of his haunts he might be expected when missing from home. When he stole out before getting to his loom in the morning, or after leaving it late at night, he generally stepped only to the dram-shop, for a glass of gin to warm him for his work, or to settle him to his sleep, as his pretence was; but when he had finished his piece and got his pay, he felt himself at liberty to go to the Spread-Eagle and have a carouse, from which he returned in the dark, sometimes reeling on his own legs, sometimes carried on other men's shoulders. This habit of drinking had grown upon him with frightful rapidity. He had, a year before, been described by his employers as a steady, well-behaved lad. He had fallen in love with Sally and married her in a hurry, found her temper disagreeable and his home uncomfortable, tried in vain to keep her in order, and then, giving up all hope, took to drinking, and would not tolerate a word of remonstrance from any one but his old friend Allen.

There were more customers this evening at the Spread-Eagle than was usual even on Saturdays. Allen was warmly welcomed as he entered, for it was supposed he came to keep company with his companions from the same factory. Almost

all present were spinners and power-loom weavers under the firm of Mortimer and Rowe; and the occasion of their assembling in greater numbers than usual, was the reduction of wages which had that day taken place. Room was made for Allen as soon as he appeared, a pipe and pot of porter called for, and he was welcomed to their consultation. But Allen looked round instead of taking his seat, and inquired for Field. The landlord pointed to a corner where Field lay in a drunken sleep under a bench.

"Let him lie," said one. "He is too far gone to be roused."

"What concern is it of yours?" cried another. "Come and listen to what Clack was saying."

"You shirked us in the street," said a third: "now we have caught you, we shall not let you go."

The landlord being really of opinion that Field had better lie where he was for an hour or two, Allen sat down to hear what was going on.

Clack turned to him to know what their masters deserved for lowering their wages.

"That depends upon circumstances," replied Allen. "Be they much to blame or little, something must be done to prevent a further reduction, or many of us will be ruined."

"Shake hands, my fine fellow!" cried Clack. "That was just what we had agreed. It is time such tyranny was put down, and we can put it down, and we will."

"Gently, gently," said Allen. "How do you think of putting it down?"

"Why should not we root out the one who is the most of a tyrant, and then the others may take warning before it is too late? We have nothing to do but to agree."

"No easy matter sometimes, friend."

"Stuff! we have agreed before upon a less occasion, and when there was danger in it. Had not we our combinations, when combination was against the law? and shall not we have them again now that the law lets us alone? Shall we be bold in the day of danger and shrink when that day is over?"

"Well, well, neighbour: I said nothing about being afraid. What would you have us agree to do?"

"To root out Messrs. Mortimer and Rowe. Every man in our union must be sworn not to enter their gates; and if this does not frighten the masters and make them more reasonable, I don't know what will."

"And if, instead of being frightened, the masters unite to refuse us work till we give up our stand against Mortimer and Rowe, what are we to do then?"

"To measure our strength against theirs, to be sure. You know they can't do without us."

"Nor we without them; and where both parties are so necessary to each other, it is a pity they should fall out."

"A pity! To be sure it is a pity; but if the masters drive us to it, the blame rests with them."

"I hope," said a timid-looking man, Hare by

name, who had a habit of twirling his hat when silent, and of scratching his head when he spoke, "I hope, neighbour, you will think what you are about before you mention a strike. I've seen enough of strikes. I had rather see my children on the parish than strike."

Clack looked disdainfully at him, and said it was well that some dove-like folks had not to manage a fight against the eagle. For his part, he thought any man ought to be proud of the honour of making a stand against any oppression; and that he had rather, for his own share, have the thanks of the Union Committee than wear Wellington's star. Would not his friend Allen say the same?

No. Allen agreed with Hare so far as thinking that there could be few worse evils than a strike; but at the same time it was an evil which might become necessary in certain cases. When convinced that it was necessary in defence of the rights of the working-man, he would join in it heart and hand; but never out of spite or revenge,—never to root out any master breathing. —So many agreed in this opinion, that Clack grew more eager than ever in defending himself and blaming the masters in question.

"Dare any one say," he cried, "that the Dey of Algiers himself is a greater tyrant than Mortimer would be if he dared? Does not he look as if he would trample us under foot if he could? Does not he smile with contempt at whatever is said by a working-man? Does not he spurn every complaint, and laugh at every threat? and

if he takes it into his lofty head to do a kindness, does not he make it bitter with his pride?"

"All true, Clack, as everybody knows that works for Mortimer; but——"

"And as for Rowe," interrupted the talker, "he is worse, if possible, in his way."

"I don't know," said Hare, doubtfully. "Mr. Rowe came once and talked very kindly with me."

"Aye, when he had some purpose to answer. We are all, except you, Hare, wise enough to know what Rowe's pretty speeches mean. You should follow him to the next masters' meeting, man, and hear how he alters his tone with his company. The mean-spirited, shuffling knave!"

"Well, well, Clack; granting that Mortimer is tyrannical and Rowe not to be trusted,—that does not alter the case about rooting them out. To make the attempt is to acknowledge at the outset that the object of our union is a bad one: it will fill the minds of the operatives with foul passions and provoke a war between masters and men which will end in the destruction of both. Whenever we do strike, let it be in defence of our own rights, and not out of enmity to individuals among our employers."

Clack muttered something about there being shufflers among the men as well as the masters; to which Allen replied that the way to make shufflers was to use intimidation. The more wisdom and moderation there was in the proceedings of any body of men, the better chance

there was of unanimity and determination. He repeated that, as long as the Union of which he was a member kept in view the interests of the body of operatives, he would be found ready to do and to sacrifice his share; but as soon as it should set to work on other objects, he should withdraw at all risks.

Before he had done speaking, the attention of his companions was called off by an unexpected addition to their company. Music had been heard gradually approaching for some minutes, and now the musician stood darkening the door and almost deafening the people within with the extraordinary variety of sounds he produced. An enormous drum was strapped across his body; a Pan's pipe employed his mouth, and his hat, with a pointed crown and a broad brim, was garnished with bells. A little girl, fantastically dressed, performed on the triangle, and danced, and collected halfpence from the bystanders. While the musician played a jig, jerking his head incessantly from side to side, nobody thought of looking particularly at him: but when he turned to the company within doors and set his little companion to sing to his playing

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,"

several of the debaters began to fancy that they knew the face and figure of the musician. "It is—yes, it certainly is Bray!" said one to another; and many a hand was held out to him.

"I thought you were not likely to forget old acquaintance, even if they come in a new dress,"

said Bray, laughing heartily, and proceeding to deposit his decorations with one or another of his former companions. He put his hat on Allen's head, slipped the strap of his drum over Clack's shoulders, and gave the triangle to Hare.

"Come," said he, "let us have a concert. It is my turn to see spinners turn strollers. Come, Allen, shake your head, man, and let us hear what comes out of it."

"How we have wondered," exclaimed Allen, "what had become of you and yours! Is that poor little Hannah that used to be so delicate?"

"The same that your good wife nursed through the measles. She would hardly know her now."

Allen shook his head.

"Ah, I see what you mean," said Bray. "You had rather see her covered with white cotton flakes than with yellow ribands; but remember it is no fault of mine that she is not still a piecer in yonder factory; and I don't know that I need call it my misfortune any more than my fault. Look how strong and plump she is! so much for living in the open air, instead of being mewed up in a place like an oven. Now, don't take off the hat on purpose to shake your head. What can a man do——" and looking round, he appealed to the company, "what can a proscribed man do but get his living, so as not to have to ask for work?"

A loud clapping and shuffling of feet was the answer to his question. The noise half roused

the drunken man in the corner, who rolled himself over to the terror of little Hannah, who had got as far as she could out of the way of the smokers, among whom her father had been so well received. Allen rose to go, having some hope that Field might be safely set on his legs again by this time. He asked Bray whether he meant to stay in the neighbourhood, and where he would lodge.

"You must stay," cried one, "and play a tune before your old masters' gates."

"You must stay," said another, "and see how we manage a strike now-a-days."

"A strike! Are you going to try your strength again? You will make me wish I was one of you still; but I can head the march. Stay? Yes, I'll stay and lead you on to victory. Hurra! I'll go recruiting with my drum. I'll manage to meet Mortimer, when I have a procession a mile long at my heels!"

"You lay by your drum on Sundays, I suppose?" said Allen.

"Yes, yes. We keep within and take our rest on Sundays. It is as great a treat to us to sit within doors all day once a week, as it is to some other folks to get into the green meadows. If the landlord can give us lodging, you will find us here in the morning, Allen."

"Let Hannah go home with me, Bray. I know my wife will be glad to see her and to hear her story, and this is no place for a child. If I can rouse yon sleeper, I will go now, and send my wife with a cloak or something to hide

the child's frippery, and then she will spend to-morrow in a fitter place than a public-house."

Bray sat gravely looking at his child for a few moments, and then started up, saying that he would undertake to rouse the sleeper. Blowing the Pan's pipe close by his ear made him start, and a rub-a-dub on the drum woke him up effectually: so that he was able, cross and miserable, to crawl homewards with the help of Allen's arm, and to be put to bed by his wife with the indistinct dread in his mind of a terrible lecture as soon as he should be in a condition to listen to it.

Chapter II.

CHILD'S GOSSIP.

Much business was transacted at the Spread-Eagle on the Sunday by the Committee of the Union. It was the general opinion that a great struggle between masters and men was on the eve of taking place, and measures were adopted for finding out what was the disposition of the operative spinners respecting a general strike, if an equalization of wages was not to be obtained by other means. It had been agreed on the Saturday night that twenty-five members of the Union should employ the Sunday in obtaining the

names of as many as were willing to turn out, or to subscribe for the assistance of those who should turn out, in case of opposition from the masters. These twenty-five men were to bring in their reports on Sunday night; after which, if the affair should look promising, a petition was to be addressed to the masters, for a public meeting, at which an equalization of wages was to be agreed on.

Clack was somewhat at a loss how to apportion his own business, and that of other people, on this occasion. Having a very high opinion of his own powers of persuasion, and being confident of his knowledge of law, he wanted to be everywhere at once, and to guide all the movements of the people he employed. As this was impossible, however, he thought it best to remain in some known place of appeal where parties might come to him for direction and information. He therefore sat at the Spread-Eagle all day big with importance, and dissatisfied only because his underlings could not be about their business abroad, and listening to him at the same time.

The Allens knew nothing of what was going forward. Mrs. Allen was so full of interest and curiosity about little Hannah Bray, that she had no thoughts to bestow on public affairs, as the transactions of the Union were commonly called. Her husband had gone early into the country with Bray this day dressed like other people, to visit some relations of the latter, who did not know what had become of him after he had been

refused employment in Manchester, and obliged to betake himself to some new mode of obtaining a livelihood.

Little Hannah slept till the sun was high on the Sunday morning, and might have slept longer if Mrs. Allen had not feared she would not get breakfast over in time for church. Hannah jumped up with the excuse that the place was so quiet, there was nothing to wake her.

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Allen. "We think the children and the neighbours make a great deal of noise; but I suppose you sleep in public-houses for the most part."

Hannah observed that people call so loud for what they want in public-houses, and they care so little for hours, that there is no knowing when you may sleep quietly.

"Have you no other frock than that, my dear?" asked Mrs. Allen. "I suppose you go to church on Sundays, and you cannot possibly go in all those gay ribands."

"O no," said Hannah. "I have a dark frock for Sundays, and a straw bonnet; but they are in father's pack, and I suppose that is at the Spread-Eagle."

"And he is gone into the country for the day. Well, you must change with Martha when church time comes. Poor Martha has but one tidy frock; but she is too lame to go out to-day, even as far as the apothecary's; and I am sure she will lend you her frock and tippet to go to church in."

Martha was willing to lend but had rather put on her factory dress than Hannah's red frock with yellow trimmings. Hannah hinted that she should like to stay within with Martha all day; and the indulgent mother, seeing Martha's pleasure at the prospect of a companion and nurse of her own age, left the little girls to amuse themselves, while she took the younger children to church with her as usual.

"Father says he heard you sing last night," said Martha when they were left alone. "Will you sing to me?"

"I am so tired of singing!" pleaded Hannah. "I don't know many songs, and I sing them so very often! Won't that bird do as well? Let me get down the cage, may I?"

"Yes, do, and we will give him some water, poor fellow! He is my bird and I feed him every day. Somebody that could not afford to keep him sold him to father, and father gave him to me. Had you ever a bird?"

"No, but I had a monkey once. When we went away, father got a monkey, and I used to lead him about with a string; but I was glad when we had done with him, he was so mischievous. Look here how he tore my arm one day, when somebody had put him in a passion with giving him empty nutshells."

"What a terrible place!" said Martha. "Was it long in getting well?"

"No; father got an apothecary to tie it up, and it soon got well."

"My father is going to show my knees to

Mr. Dawson, the apothecary. Do look how they are swelled; and they ache so, you can't think."

"O, but I can think, for mine used to ache terribly when I walked and stood before the wheels all day."

"But yours were never so bad as mine, or I am sure you could not dance about as you do."

"Not so bad, to be sure, and my arms were never so shrunk away as yours. Look, my arm is twice as big as yours."

"I wonder what's the reason," sighed Martha. "Mother says I get thinner and thinner.'

"You should have meat for dinner every day as I have," said Hannah, "and then you would grow fat like me. Father gets such good dinners for us to what we used to have. He says 'tis that, and being in the air so much that prevents my being sickly, as I used to be. I don't think I could do the work that I used to do with all that noise, and the smell of oil and the heat."

"And I am sure I could not sing and dance as you do."

"No, how should you dance when you are so lame?"

"And I don't think I can sing at all."

"Come, try, and I will sing with you. Try 'God save the king.'"

"It is Sunday," said Martha gravely.

"Well, I thought people might sing 'God save the king' on Sundays. I have heard father play it on the drum, just before the Old Hundred. You know the Old Hundred."

Martha had heard this hymn-tune at church, and she tried to sing it; but Hannah burst out a laughing.

"Lord! Martha, your voice is like a little twittering bird's. Can't you open your mouth and sing this way?"

"No, I can't," said Martha, quite out of breath; "and besides, Hannah, you should not say 'Lord!' Father and mother never let us say those sort of words."

"Nor my father either. He is more angry with me for that, than for anything; but it slips out somehow, and you would not wonder if you knew how often I hear people say that, and many worse things."

"Worse things?" said Martha, looking curious.

"Yes; much worse things; but I am not going to tell you what they are, because father made me promise not to tell you about any of the bad people that I have heard swear and seen tipsy. Was your father ever tipsy?"

"Not that I know of; but our neighbour Field is often tipsy. I am afraid every day that he will topple down stairs."

"My father was tipsy once," said Hannah, "and he beat me so, you can't think."

"When? Lately?"

"No, just after we began to stroll. Though it is so long ago, I remember it very well, for I was never so frightened in my life. I did not know where to go to get away from him; and the people pushed him about and laughed at me the

more the more I cried. I asked him afterwards not to get tipsy any more, and he said he never would, and he never has. It was only because we had got more money that day than we ever got in a day before: but it soon went away, for when father woke the next morning, his pocket was quite empty."

"And did you soon get some more money?"

"O yes; we get some every day except Sundays. I carry the hat round every time we stop to play, and I always get some halfpence and sometimes a silver sixpence."

"Ah! then, you get a great deal more than I do, Hannah. I brought home only three shillings this week."

"I take much more than that, to be sure; but then it is my father's carning more than mine. His great drum sounds farther and brings more people to listen than my triangle."

"Is your triangle here? I wish you would teach me to play," said Martha. "Now do. If you will, I will ask mother to show us the pictures in grandfather's bible when she comes home."

Hannah had been very fond of these pictures when she was recovering from the measles; and this bribe and her goodnature together overcame her disgust at the instrument she had to play every day and almost all day long. She indulged herself with a prodigious yawn, and then began her lesson. When Mrs. Allen came back, she found the bulfinch piping at his loudest pitch to the accompaniment of the triangle, Hannah

screaming her instructions to her new pupil, and poor palefaced little Martha flushed with flattery and with the grand idea of earning a great many silver sixpences every day if her father would let her make music in the streets instead of going to the factory.

CHAPTER III.

NO UNION OF MASTERS.

THE achievements of the twenty-five who canvassed for support during Sunday were such as to put Clack into high spirits. The list of names with signatures or marks annexed, amounted to several thousands; and if the orator had been allowed to have his own way, he would have proclaimed war against the masters at once, and the turn-out would have begun on the Monday morning: but there were a few soberer folks than himself engaged in the consultation; and these smiled at his brag of the many thousand pounds that would pour in from Leeds, Coventry, Liverpool, Glasgow, and other places, and insisted upon offering the masters the option of a peaceable agreement before any measures of opposition were taken.

Clack retorted that these men were afraid of their wives, and declared that they might wait

long for a strike if it was necessary to refrain till the women voted for it, since there was never a woman yet who did not hate a turn-out as she would the plague.

This observation called forth some joke at his expense, for Clack was known to be engaged to be married, and it was thought he spoke from awkward experience. In the eagerness of defence he went a step too far. He asked if it was likely, knowing the disposition of the women on this subject, that he should consult any woman breathing as to the part he should take, or provoke opposition from any female tongue, or care for it if he should happen to meet with it. These words were, as he might have expected, carried to the ears which should never have heard them, and prevented his next meeting with his betrothed from being the pleasantest in the world. While a storm was brewing at a distance in consequence of his indiscreet boast, Clack made himself very merry with those who were less bold than himself.

"Where is Hare to-day? Henpecked, I warrant. Did not he promise faithfully to be one of the twenty-five?"

"Yes, and he is no where to be found," said a neighbour.

"But I wonder, Clack, you troubled yourself to take a promise from such a shilly-shally fellow as Hare. His being married has nothing to do with it: he was never in the same mind for an hour together from his youth up."

"How did he get married then?"

"O there was another and a steadier mind concerned in that matter, you know: not that I mean any harm against his wife: she is as mild as she is sensible. I only mean that her judgment strengthens his when they have to act together."

"Then I suppose she does not like the idea of a strike any better than the other women, and persuades him not to come?"

"More likely she knows nothing of it. If there is one thing rather than another that Hare is afraid of, it is combination. That imprisonment of his father under the old combination laws made him a coward for life; and there is no use in telling him that the law leaves us to manage our own business now as long as we keep the peace."

"He does, indeed, make a pitiful figure between his dread of belonging to the Union and his horror of being left out. But why do we waste our breath upon him? Who has seen Allen to-day, and why does he not come? We shall count his modesty for backwardness if he does not take care."

"Don't be in a hurry to blame a better man than yourself," said a neighbour. "Allen has been in the country all day."

There was no offence in such a comparison; for Allen was generally looked up to as the first man in that branch of the Union, though he was so little aware of his own merits that he did not come forward so much as he should have done, except on urgent occasions; and then he never failed to do all that was expected of him.

When the petition to the masters to hold a public meeting was prepared, and when Clack had appointed himself and two others to carry it round the next day, the Committee terminated their present sitting.

The first firm to which the deputies addressed their petition was that of Mortimer and Rowe.

"Are the partners at home?" they inquired.

"I don't know whether Mr. Mortimer is here yet, but there is Mr. Rowe. Sir! Mr. Rowe!" called the clerk, as he saw the junior partner making his escape, "these men wish to speak with you, sir, if you please."

Mr. Rowe, perceiving that he had been seen, came forward to be spoken with.

"A public meeting,—equalization of wages,—aye, very fair: hum! very well, my good fellows. Well: what do you want me to do?"

"To give your voice in favour of this public meeting."

"Why, you know you have a good friend in me. You surely cannot anticipate any difficulty with me. I am a friend of peace, you know. No man more so."

"Aye, sir: but there is more than one sort of peace. The masters have called it peace when they had all their own way, and their men were cowed by the law and dared not openly resist. The men call it peace when the two parties have confidence in each other, and make a cordial agreement, and keep to it. This is what we want at the present time."

So said Gibson, whose turn it was to be

spokesman; but Clack could not help putting in his word.

"And if either party refuses peace, you know, sir, the next thing is war."

"O, no war!" said Mr. Rowe. "A cordial agreement, as you say, is the right thing. So, for this purpose you wish for a public meeting. Well; I shall be happy to attend a public meeting, if——"

"We are happy to find you so agreeable, sir. Will you just sign for self and partner, if you please."

"Sign! I see no signatures."

"Because you happen to be the first person we have applied to, sir; that is all. We hope for signatures plenty before the day is over. Will you please to sign, as you approve of the meeting?"

Mr. Rowe suddenly recollected that he must consult his partner who sat in a back room. The men had not to wait long. The junior partner, indeed, did not appear again, but Mr. Mortimer issued forth, looking not a whit less haughty than usual. He begged the deputies would make the best of their way off his premises, as he had nothing to say to them

What were his sentiments respecting the meeting, if they might inquire?

His sentiments were, that the masters had been far too tolerant already of the complaints of the men; and that it was time the lower orders were taught their proper place. He had neither lei-

sure nor inclination to argue with any of them, either there or elsewhere; so the sooner they took themselves off the better.

"You may live to change your sentiments, sir," observed Gibson.

"Beware of threats!" said Mr. Mortimer. "There is law yet for the punishment of threats, remember."

"I have neither forgotten the law, Mr. Mortimer, nor used threats. I said, and I say again, you may live to change your sentiments; and, for your own sake, it is to be hoped you will. Good morning, sir."

"He is too busy even to wish us good morning," observed Clack. "How coolly he looked over the letter he took from his clerk, as if we were not worth attending to for a moment!"

"Haughty as he is," said Gibson, "I would sooner bear with his pride than Rowe's behaviour or Elliot's."

"They are young men, Gibson, and Mortimer is old, and we would sooner bear with an old man's mistakes than a young man's, be they what they may! Where next? To Elliott's?"

"Yes, we are sure of being ill-treated there; so the sooner it is over the better."

As they approached Mr. Elliott's house, they perceived that gentleman mounted on his favourite hunter, and in the act of leaving his own door. He was too much occupied with his own affairs to see them coming, for the most important part of his morning's business was setting off for his ride; and he had eyes for little else

while he was admiring the polish of his boots, adjusting his collar, settling the skirts of his coat, and patting his horse's neck. Clack was not the man for ceremony; he came straight up before the horse, and laid his hand on the handsome new rein, saying, "By your leave, sir—"

"Hands off," cried Elliott, giving him a cut across the knuckles with his riding-whip. "How dare you stop me? How dare you handle my rein with your greasy fingers?"

"How would you get such a rein, I wonder, sir, if we did not grease our fingers in your service?" said Clack, indignantly.

"I'm in a hurry," said Elliott; "you can speak to the people within, if you want any thing."

"We will not detain you, sir," said Taylor, who was now spokesman, "but nobody but yourself can answer our question." And he told the story in a few words, and put the petition into the gentleman's hands.

Elliott glanced his eye over it as well as the restlessness of his horse would permit, and then struck it contemptuously with his riding-whip into the mud, swore that that was the proper place for such a piece of insolence, rode up against the men, and pranced down the street without bestowing another look or word upon them.

"Pride comes before a fall; let the gentleman take care of himself," said Gibson, quietly picking up the petition and wiping off the mud with his handkerchief.

Clack talked about using his greasy fingers to cram the soiled petition down the gentleman's

throat, and seemed disposed to harangue the laughing bystanders; but his more prudent companions took him by the arm and led him away. Mr. Elliott's clerk, who had seen the whole proceeding from an upper window, and was ashamed of his master's conduct, came after them, out of breath, to ask them in while he copied the petition, which was not, as he observed, fit to show to any other gentleman. Gibson thanked him for his civility, but observed that the soiled paper would tell part of their story better than they could tell it themselves. The clerk, therefore, slowly returned, saying to himself that it is a pity when young men, coming to a large fortune obtained in trade, forget by whose means their wealth was acquired, and by what tenure it is held.

After visiting several manufacturers, some of whom were more and others less favourable to their claims than they expected, the deputies requested an interview with Mr. Wentworth. Mr. Wentworth had been rich as a young man, had failed through unavoidable misfortunes, and had worked his way up again to a competence, after having paid every shilling he owed. He was now an elderly man, homely in his person, somewhat slovenly in his dress, not much given to talk, and, when he did speak, causing some surprise and weariness to strangers by the drawling twang of his speech. Those who knew him well, however, had rather hear his voice than any music; and such of his men as belonged to the Union agreed that ten words from him were worth a speech of an hour long from Clack. There was,

to be sure, no need for so many words from him as from other people, for he practised a great variety of inarticulate sounds, the meaning of which was well understood by those accustomed to converse with him, and served all the purposes of a reply.

Mr. Wentworth was sitting at his desk when the deputies were introduced. As they uncovered their heads and made their bow, some murmurings and clutterings reached them which they understood as a welcome. He looked steadily at them from under his shaggy eyebrows while they explained their business, and then took the petition to look over.

"You can hardly have any paper-makers in your Union," said he, chuckling as he unfolded the sheet; "or are you saving your pence against a strike, that you can't afford paper as fair as your writing?"

"Aye, aye; wait a while and you will see him grow wiser," was his observation on hearing the story of Elliott's insolence. "We were all boys before we were men.—Hum:—equalization.—Who will avouch that this equalization is all that you want?"

"I, sir," said the ever-ready Clack—"I drew it up, and so I ought to know."

Gibson observed, that though no further object was expressly contemplated by the Union, he would not answer for their not increasing their demands as they proceeded. If there was any attempt to equalize the wages by reducing all to the lowest now given, the Union would demand an advance.

"Who gives the lowest?" inquired Mr. Wentworth.

"Except some upstarts whom we can easily manage, Mortimer and Rowe give the lowest, and you, sir, the next lowest, and Elliott the highest."

"Who was lamenting lately that the combination laws were repealed, so that the masters cannot be prosecuted for oppression? Who proposed to burn them in effigy, tied to one another's necks?"

The deputies looked at one another, and then answered that all this was only private talk of one of their meetings; it was never meant for earnest.

"Well, I only let you know that you may look about your Committee-room and find where the little bird builds that carries the matter; and if you can't find her, take care that she has nothing to carry that you would be ashamed to own. Did you learn from her that the masters combine against you?"

"We learn it from our own eyes, and ears, and senses," said Clack. "Have not masters oppressed their men from the beginning of the world?"

"Indeed I don't know," said Mr. Wentworth. "If Adam had a gardener under him in Paradise, they might have tried to turn one another out, but I never heard of it."

"Stuff and nonsense, sir, begging your pardon. Don't we know that masters always have lorded it over the poor? They were born with a silver spoon in their mouths, and——"

"I wonder where mine is," observed Mr. Wentworth; "I will look in my mother's plate chest for it."

The orator went on,—

"They openly treat us like slaves as long as they can, and when we will bear it no longer, they plot in secret against us. They steal to one another's houses when they think we are asleep; they bolt their doors and fill their glasses to their own prosperity, and every bumper that goes down their throats is paid for with the poor man's crust."

"They must have made the little bird tipsy, Clack, before she carried you such a strange story as that."

"Don't tell me, sir, that it is not true! Don't tell me!'

"I am not telling you anything; for the plain reason, that I have nothing to tell. I only want to ask you one or two things, as you seem to know so much more than we do. Pray what have the masters combined for just now?"

"To lower our wages, to be sure."

"And yet Mortimer pays one rate, and I another, and Elliott another. Why don't I ask as much labour for my money as Mortimer?"

"You dare not," cried Clack.

"You know it's not fair," said Taylor.

"You are not the man to grind the poor," said Gibson.

"You have not hit it, any of you. You all seem to think it is a matter of pure choice with us, what wages we give."

"To be sure," said Clack, "and that is the reason we want parliament to settle the matter at once and for ever."

"Parliament has no more choice in the matter than we masters," drily observed Mr. Wentworth. "If ever Parliament passes a Bill to regulate wages, we must have a rider put to it to decree how much rain must fall before harvest."

Clack muttered something about not standing any longer to be trifled with; but his companions thought it possible that Mr. Wentworth might have something to say that was worth hearing, and persuaded the orator to be quiet. Gibson inquired,—

"Where then does the choice rest, sir, if neither with the government nor the masters?"

"Such power as there is rests with those who take, not with those who give wages. Not such power as tips our friend's tongue there," nodding at Clack, "not such power as you gain by the most successful strike, not such power as combination gives you, be it peaceable or threatening; but a much more lasting power which cannot be taken from you. The power of the masters is considerable, for they hold the administration of capital; but it is not on this that the rate of wages depends. It depends on the administration of labour; and this much greater power is in your hands."

The deputies thought that they who pay wages must always have power over those who receive.

"That is as much as saying that wages are a gift. I thought you had supposed them your right."

All were eager to urge the rights of industry.

"Aye, all very true; no right can be clearer when we see what wages are. Come, Clack, tell us, (for who knows if you don't?) tell us what wages Adam gave his under gardeners. You can't say? Why, I thought you knew all that the masters did at the beginning of the world. Well, when Adam was some hundred years old, (you may trust me, for I am descended from him in a straight line,) he said to Eve, 'Stay you here and spin with the women, while I go yonder and set my men to delve; and don't expect us back in a hurry, for tillage is tough work here to what it was in Eden, and we must gather our crops before we can bring them to market. Come, my good fellows, work hard and you shall have your shares.' 'And pray, sir,' said the men, 'what are we to live upon while our fruit and vegetables are growing?' 'Why,' says Adam, 'instead of my sharing the fruit with you when it is grown, suppose you take your portion in advance. It may be a convenience to you, and it is all the same thing to me.' So the men looked at the ground, and calculated how much digging and other work there would be, and then named their demand; not in silver money with king George's head upon it, but food and clothing, and tools.'

"Then at harvest time," observed Gibson, "the whole produce belonged to Adam?"

"Of course. The commodity was made up, like all commodities, of capital and labour: Adam's capital and the men's labour."

"And of a deal besides," cried Clack. "I it was grain, there was the root, and the stalk, and the ear; and if it was fruit, there was the rind, and the pulp, and the juice."

"Begging your pardon, friend, there was nothing but capital and labour. Without labour, and the soil and the tools which made the capital, there would have been neither grain nor fruit; and if grain and fruit grew wild, they could be no commodity without labour, any more than the diamond in the mine, and the pearl in the sea, are a commodity before the one is dug, and the other fished up. Well, Adam and his men expected to get as much by their crop as would pay for their subsistence and their toil; and this much the men asked, and Adam was willing to give, and a fair surplus remained over for himself. So they made their bargain, and he bought their share of the commodity, and had to himself all the flax and other things that his produce exchanged for in the market. And so that season passed off, and all were contented."

"And what happened next season, sir?"

"Next season, twice the number of men came to ask work in the same plot of ground. Adam told them that he had very little more wages to pay away than he had the year before, so that if they all wanted to work under him they must be content with little more than half what each had formerly earned. They agreed, and submitted to be rather pinched; but they hoped it would be only for a time, as it was a very fine harvest indeed, so much labour having been spent upon

it, and there being a fine profit into Adam's pocket."

"Did they wear pockets then, sir?"

"No doubt; for the women were improving their tailoring, as much as the men their gardening, and expecting, like them, to increase their gains in consequence; and so they would have done, but that four times the number of labourers appeared next year, so that, notwithstanding the increase of capital, each had not so much as one-third the original wages; and the men grew very cross, and their wives very melancholy. But how could Adam help it?"

"Why did not the men carry their labour elsewhere?" asked Clack contemptuously.

"Why do you go on spinning for Mortimer and Rowe, when Elliott pays higher wages?"

"Because nobody is taking on new hands. I can't get work."

"Well, nobody was taking on new hands in Adam's neighbourhood; all the capital was already employed."

"But I don't mean to go on so," said Clack. "I shall strike with all the rest of Mortimer's men, if we don't get better paid."

"Aye, it is as I thought, Clack. Adam's head labourer was your grandfather, for he said just the same thing you are saying; and what is more, he did it. They all turned out, every man of them, and let the field take care of itself."

"And what happened?"

"Only half a harvest came up; so that, of course, wages were lower than ever next year. The

worst folly of all was that they went on to blame Adam, though he showed them that the harvest would not even pay its own expenses; much less leave anything to divide between him and them. 'You talk to me,' says he, 'as if I could get capital down from the clouds as fast as I please: whereas you might have seen from the beginning, that I have a certain quantity and no more. If you choose to bring a thousand labourers to live upon the capital which was once divided among a hundred, it is your fault and not mine that you are badly off.'"

"If the thousand men agreed to live for so little, it was their own affair, to be sure."

"And if they did not agree, their bidding against each other could not shift the blame upon Adam. If there was such competition among the men as to enable him to obtain more labour for the same wages, he was not to blame, was he, for employing three men for what he had at first paid to one?"

"Nor were the men to blame, sir, for bargaining for such wages as were to be had."

"Certainly. Where then was the evil?"

"Clearly in there being too many hands for the work to be done," replied Gibson. "But who could help that, sir?"

"Nobody could relieve the immediate pressure, Gibson, unless some had the means of taking themselves off, or of applying their labour to some employment which was less overstocked; but all had it in their power to prevent the evil returning. By foresight and care, labour may

be proportioned to capital as accurately as my machinery to the power of my steam-engine."

"What has all this to do with our petition?" asked the orator, who was impatient of remaining so long in the background.

"A great deal," replied Gibson. "Mr. Wentworth means to point out how much rests with the masters, and how much with the men, and to warn us against a strike. But, sir, about equalization of wages: you think that fair enough, I suppose. In the very same market, and under the very same circumstances, labour ought to be paid at the same rate, surely?"

"One circumstance, you know, is the extent of the master's capital, which is seldom the same in any two cases, and on which his power of waiting for his returns depends. But I agree with you that a man cannot safely lower his rate of wages much and permanently below that of his competitors, and that an equalization of wages is desirable for all parties; so I will sign my agreement to your wish for a public meeting. Coming, Charles, coming."

Gibson had observed Mr. Wentworth's old gray pony in the yard for some time, and he now saw that Charles looked tired of leading it backwards and forwards while the animal turned its head one way and another, as if looking for its usually punctual master. While helping the gentleman on with the heavy great-coat, which he wore winter and summer, the deputy apologized for having kept the rider and his steed so long asunder.

"Never mind," drawled Mr. Wentworth. "Dobbin and I have two rounds, a long, and a short; and I dare say he has made up his mind already which it will be to-day. If I have helped you to a short cut to your business, you will not think your time wasted any more than I." Then as he buttoned the last button, and pulled his hat over his brows, "That's well: all tight. Hey ho, Dobbin! Good day to ye all."

The shaggy pony pricked up his ears, quickened his pace, and well nigh nodded to his master at the sound of his voice. When Mr. Wentworth scrambled up into the saddle and left the yard at a funeral pace, the deputies looked with much more respect on him and his equipage, than on the brilliant spectacle they had met at Elliott's door.

Chapter IV.

UNION OF MEN.

As soon as it was ascertained that, though many of the masters declined committing themselves by signing their names, most or all of them would attend the desired meeting, Clack took upon himself to issue a placard, whose large red and black letters attracted the eyes of all who could read. It made known the intention of the

masters to meet at the York Hotel, on the Wednesday afternoon, and of the Committee of the men to hold a previous meeting at the Spread Eagle, in the morning, in order to prepare resolutions to be laid before the masters. The Committee was to be escorted to and fro by a circuitous route by a procession; and the place appointed where those were to meet who wished to make a part of the show, was St. George's Fields. The placard began and ended by an appeal to the people to guard their rights against oppression. Many were surprised at the anxiety of the leading men among the spinners to disown this placard. It seemed to the crowd very spirited and eloquent, and they began to look out their decorations for the procession.

Bray was one of the first on the spot, piping, drumming, and shaking his bells at the appearance of every new group. Other musicians joined the train, flags were displayed, the women gathered to look on, the children cheered and brought green boughs, and all had the appearance of rejoicing, though it would have been difficult for any one to say what there was to rejoice about. Many had no clear idea of what was doing or going to be done: some had no idea at all, and those who knew best thought it a pity that such a display should have been made as might bear the appearance of being intended to intimidate the masters. The Committee were so generally of this opinion, that they did not attend, but went quietly, one by one, to the Spread Eagle; so that, in fact, the procession

was formed to escort Clack, and nobody else. This was all the more glorious for him, he thought; and he walked proudly just behind the chief musician, Bray, now shaking hands from side to side, now bowing with his hand on his heart, now bidding all halt and giving the signal for groans or cheers. There were three groans at Mortimer and Rowe's, and three cheers at Elliott's, which were received with infinite disdain by that gentleman as he sat at his breakfast table, balancing his egg-spoon and glancing at the newspaper. The procession next overtook Mr. Wentworth in Chancery Lane, pacing to business on his gray pony. All eyes were turned to Clack for a signal whether to groan or cheer. There was, in the meanwhile, a faint beginning of each, at which the pony looked more astonished than his master, who only chuckled and murmured in his usual manner as he looked upon the assemblage with a quiet smile.

"What do you expect to get by this fine show?" said he to a youth near him.

"Cheap bread! Hurrah!" cried the lad waving his bludgeon, and wishing there was a loaf on the top of it.

"And you, and you, and you?" said Mr. Wentworth to one and another as they passed.

"No potato peelings! Reform and good wages! Liberty and cheap bread!" cried they, according to their various notions. The children's only idea was (and it was the wisest) that it was a holiday, with a procession and a band of music.

When Clack had got a little a-head of the slow-moving pony and its rider, he decided to halt and hold a short parley. Advancing with a bow, he said,

"You call yourself the poor man's friend, I believe, sir?"

"No man's enemy, I hope," replied Mr. Wentworth.

"Then allow us the honour of giving you three cheers on your pledge to support our interests this evening. Hats off!"

"Better wait awhile," said Mr. Wentworth. "Cheers will keep, and I dislike unnecessary pledges."

Clack looked suspicious, and nods and winks went round.

"We might differ, you know, as to what your interests are, and then I might seem to break my word when I did not mean it."

"Let him go free," said a bystander. "He knows the consequences if he opposes us."

"That is rather a strange way of letting me go free," observed the gentleman, smiling. "However, friend, threats are empty air to a man who knows *his* own mind; and my *mind* is made up to consider the interests of *all*, come groans, come cheers."

"It is not everybody, sir, who would speak so independently,—to our faces too."

"True, friend. All the masters and all the men have not my years, and have not learned to look steadily in honest faces; and that is why I am sorry to see this parade, which looks too much

like intimidation. Come now, be persuaded. I will give you house-room for your flags, and my old friend Bray there shall not lose his job; he shall make it a holiday to the children in my factory."

It was too much to ask of Clack. He could not give up his procession, and so made haste to march on. As Mr. Wentworth turned in at his factory gate in Ancoats Street, every man in the long train bowed respectfully. In his case, the regard of his neighbours was not measured by the rate of wages he paid.

The procession, having deposited Clack at the Spread-Eagle, was by no means so ready to depart as to arrive. They insisted that it should be an open meeting, and that they should have a voice in the demands to be offered to the masters. They rushed through the house to the skittle-ground behind, caused a table with paper and ink to be placed in an arbour, and, setting the Committee entirely aside on the plea that this was a special occasion, began to call aloud for Allen to take the chair. Allen was nowhere to be found on the premises, for the good reason that he was at his work, and knew little of what was going on. Being sent for, he presently appeared and asked what he was wanted for.

"To take the chair."

But Allen was too modest to accept the honour at a word; he drew back, and urged his being totally unused to come forward at public meetings, and named several who understood the management of that kind of business better than himself. Those that he named were all single

men; for he bore in mind,—and this certainly added to his reluctance,—that the sin of taking a prominent part in a combination of workmen, is apt to be remembered against the sinner when the days of trouble are over; and he felt that a family man was not the one who ought to be made to incur the risk.—When further pressed, he did not scruple to declare this to be one of his objections; but the people were in the humour to overcome objections, and they promised faithfully that he and his family should not be injured; that if discharged from the factory, they should be maintained by the Union; and that as no one knew so much of their affairs as Allen, as he could express himself with moderation in speech, and with ease on paper, he was the man to be at the head of their affairs, and that it was his bounden duty to accept the office.

Allen could not deny this, and did not, therefore, dally with his duty; but it cost him a bitter pang. While Clack listened and looked on with a feeling of jealousy, and thought it a moment of triumph such as he would fain have enjoyed himself, he little knew how little Allen was to be envied. He could not guess what feelings rushed on Allen's mind at the moment that he took the decisive step into the arbour and seated himself at the table, and received the pen into his hand. Thoughts of the dismay of his timid wife, of the hardships to which he might expose his children, of the difficulties of his office, and the ill-will which its discharge must sometimes bring upon him,—thoughts of the quarrels in which he

must mediate, and of the distress which, in case of a turn-out, he must witness, without much power to relieve,—might have overcome a man of firmer nerve than Allen; but though they distressed, they did not conquer him, convinced as he was that he ought not to evade the choice of the people. His fellow-labourers allowed him a few minutes to collect his thoughts before addressing them, and while he was seemingly arranging the papers before him, they packed themselves and one another closely, in order to leave room for new comers, without creating a noise and bustle. Those who stood nearest the arbour hung the flags so as to make a sort of canopy over it, and a few of the most efficient of the standing Committee took their places on each side of Allen.—His address was in natural accordance with the feelings which had just passed through his mind :—

"Combinations are necessary, my fellow-labourers, when one set of men is opposed to another, as we are to our masters. The law could not prevent combinations, even when severe punishments visited those who were engaged in them; which was a clear proof that men must combine, that the law was of no use, and ought therefore to be done away. Let me congratulate you that these severe laws are done away; that a man cannot now be shut up in prison for many months together for agreeing with his companions to withhold their labour in order to increase its price. Let me congratulate you that when a man cannot be caught in the

trap of the combination laws, he can no longer be punished under a law against conspiracy, which was made long before such a thing as combinations of workmen were thought of. We can now meet in the face of day, and conduct our bargains with our masters either by agreement or opposition, without any one having a right to interfere, as long as we keep the peace. Evils there are, indeed, still; and such a thing is still heard of as persecution in consequence of a combination; but such evils as are inflicted by the crushing hand of power light on a few, and the devotion of those few secures the exemption of the rest. It is certainly an evil to a peaceably disposed man to see himself regarded with a fierce eye by those to whom he no longer dares touch his hat lest he should be accused of suing for mercy. It is certainly an evil to a man of independent mind to be placed under the feet of any former enemy, to receive his weekly subsistence from the hands of his equals, and to fancy that the whisper is going round—'This is he who lives upon our gathered pence.'—Such evils await, as you know, him who comes forward to lead a combination; but they belong to the state of affairs; and since they can neither be helped, nor be allowed to weigh against the advantages of union, they should be, not only patiently, but silently borne. Well is it for the victim if he can say to himself that now is the time for him to practise the heroism which in grander scenes has often made his bosom throb. He may even esteem himself honoured in his lot being some-

what of the same cast,—though his own consciousness alone may perceive the resemblance,—something of the same cast, I say, with that of venerated statesmen who have returned to the plough to be forgotten in their own age, and remembered in another,—with that of generals who have held out the decrepit hand with a petition to the gay passers by to give a halfpenny to the deliverer of their country.—Nay, no cheers yet! Your cheers only recall me with shame to that which I was going to say when my personal feelings led me away,—led me to compare that which is universally allowed to be moving because it is noble, with that which, if moving at all, is so only because it is piteous. As I was saying, combinations are ordered by laws more powerful than those which, till lately, forbade them; and this shows the wisdom of the repeal of the latter. If it had been wished to prevent our meeting for caprice or sport, laws might have availed. If their object had been to hinder the idle from meeting to dissipate their tediousness, or the gamesome from pursuing that on which no more valuable thing was staked than their present pleasure, these laws might have been successfully, though somewhat tyrannically, enforced. But such are not they who form combinations: but rather such as have their frames bowed with over-toil, and their brows knit with care, such as meet because the lives and health of their families, their personal respectability, and the bare honesty of not stealing a loaf from another man's counter, are the tremendous stake

which they feel to be put to hazard. Sound and wise laws can restrain the fiercest passions of the few, because, being sound and wise, they are supported by the many; and it is therefore clear that when laws give way like cobwebs before the impulse of a body of men too united to be brought together by caprice, those laws are neither wise nor sound. Such were the combination laws, and therefore were they repealed. Never again will it be attempted to set up the prohibition of parliament against the commands of nature,—a threat of imprisonment against the cravings of hunger. Security of person and property being provided for, (as, indeed, they were already by former laws,) we are left free to make the best agreement we can for the sale of our labour, and to arrange our terms by whatever peaceable methods we choose.

"Combination on our part is necessary from power being lodged unequally in the hands of individuals, and it is necessary for labourers to husband their strength by union, if it is ever to be balanced against the influence and wealth of capitalists. A master can do as he pleases with his hundred or five hundred workmen, unless they are combined. One word of his mouth, one stroke of his pen, can send them home on the Saturday night with a blank prospect of destitution before them; while these hundred or five hundred men must make their many wills into one before his can even be threatened with opposition. One may tremble, another may mourn, a third may utter deep down in his heart the

curses he dares not proclaim; but all this is of no avail. The only way is to bring opposition to bear upon the interests of the master; and this can only be done by union. The best of the masters say, and probably with truth, that their interests demand the reductions under which we groan. Be it so: we have interests too, and we must bring them up as an opposing force, and see which are the strongest. This may be,—allow me to say, must be—done without ill-will in any party towards any other party. There may be some method yet unknown by which the interests of all may be reconciled; if so, by union we must discover it. But if, indeed, interests must continue to be opposed, if bread must be fought for, and the discord of men must for ever be contrasted with the harmony of nature, let the battle be as fair as circumstances will allow. Let the host of pigmies try if they cannot win a chance against the regiment of giants by organizing their numbers, and knitting them into a phalanx. The odds against them are fearful, it is true; but more desperate battles have been sustained and won. I have not indeed, as the friend at my elbow reminds me, represented our case so favourably as I might have done. Many here think that the power is in our own hands; some that the chances are equal, and the least sanguine, that the chance is fair.—I have spoken of the general necessity of union, and not with any intention of taking for granted that we are on the eve of an express struggle. This depends on circumstances yet to be disclosed. Some

change, and that a speedy one, there ought to be in the condition of the working classes: they cannot go on long labouring their lives away for a less recompense than good habitations, clothing, and food. These form the very least sum of the just rewards of industry; whereas a multitude are pinched with the frosts of winter, live amidst the stench of unwholesome dwellings in summer, have nearly forgotten the taste of animal food, and even sigh for bread as for a luxury. The question to be debated, and to be put to the trial if necessary,—and I wish every master in Manchester was here to take down my words for his further consideration, is whether a social being has not a right to comfortable subsistence in return for his full and efficient labour." —Allen's pause was interrupted by a voice from behind the crowd, declaring,—

"No doubt, no doubt, my good fellows: a clear right, and I wish with all my heart you may win your right."

It was Rowe, who had entered as if for the purpose of convincing the men that he was on their side. An opening was made from the table to the outskirts of the crowd; but Rowe slunk back in opposition to all attempts to push him forward. The fact was, he saw another person present whom he little expected to meet, and before whom he was sorry to have committed himself. Mr. Wentworth advanced through the opening, with his memorandum book in his hand:—

"I am willing to put down your question,

Allen, for further discussion, provided you add a clause to it:—'Whether a member of society has not a right to a comfortable subsistence in return for full and efficient labour, *provided he does not, by his own act, put that subsistence beyond his reach?*'"

Allen smiled, and all within hearing stared at Mr. Wentworth's simplicity in adding this clause which nobody could dispute.

"We have certainly nothing to object to your addition, sir," said Allen. "Only I cannot think it necessary."

"Let it stand, however, for my satisfaction; and now go on with what you have to say."

A seat was offered to Mr. Wentworth, and proclamation was made of one for Mr. Rowe, who, however, had disappeared. Allen proceeded:—

"I have only a few words to add respecting the terms on which I will consent to resume my present office on any future occasion, or to accept of any power you may wish to put into my hands. I must be supported by you in all measures taken to preserve our own peace and that of the masters; and to this end, there must be the utmost strictness in the full performance of all contracts. Whether the present dispute be amicably settled this very evening, or whether it be protracted, or a partial or a general strike should take place,—none of these things can set aside a contract previously entered into. Integrity must be our rule as much as liberty is our warrant and justice our end. The first man who deserts the work he

has pledged himself to perform, puts the weapon of the law into the hands of our opponents; the first who is legally convicted of a breach of contract, brands our cause with indelible disgrace. We want no truants here, and we will own none but honest labourers to be of our company; and unless I am aided in preserving the reputation of our cause, I declare,—whatever may be thought of the importance of the threat,—that from that moment I withdraw my countenance and my help. If at the period of any strike, any part of my contract with my employers is undischarged, I shall hold it to be my duty to work for them during the stated number of hours, even if I should repair from their factory to preside over a meeting like the present; and the same is expected of every man who enrols himself in our bands. Honour towards our masters is as necessary as fidelity to each other."

The meeting having signified an unanimous assent to what Allen had said, he proceeded to draw up a statement of wages to be presented to the masters. A great number of men pushed and jostled one another in order to get near the table and state their grievances; for some under every firm supposed their wages to be the lowest. It was found to be as the deputies had stated, that Mortimer and Rowe paid the lowest wages, and Elliott the highest.—Mortimer and Rowe were therefore to be requested to answer this evening, yes or no, whether they would give Elliott's rate of wages. Allen, Clack, and

Gibson were deputed to wait on the masters with the written demand.

The meeting broke up for a while, and the quietest and most industrious of the men went home, while the rest prepared to parade again through the streets.

Allen withdrew one of the last, as he wished to see the place quiet before he left his post. As he turned from the door of the public-house, his hands in his pockets and his eyes bent on the ground in deep thought, he was startled by some one taking his arm. It was his wife, who had been watching and lingering in the neighbourhood till she was tired and frightened.

"Why, Mary," said her husband, smiling, "you will make me lose my good name. This is the way wives haunt the public-house when their husbands are given to drink."

Mary could trust her husband for soberness if ever woman could; but she feared his being drawn in to join against the masters, and bring ruin on his family.

Allen answered that he was not the man to be *drawn in* to do what his wife knew he disliked as much as she could do; but he might of his own free choice determine to do what she feared; and, in that case, he trusted the discharge of his public duty would not be embittered by domestic opposition and discontent. His prospect was not a very cheering one, however, in this respect. When fairly seated in his own home, his wife seemed prodigiously inclined to lock the door

and pocket the key; and she cried so piteously at the bare idea of a strike and its distresses, that Allen longed to go to sleep, and forget all that had been done, and all that was in prospect.

Chapter V.

NO PROGRESS MADE.

The masters' meeting was a tedious affair to all parties. The chairman and the three deputies held such long disputes, as to whether wages were really much lower than formerly, that the people who waited in anxious expectation at the Spread-Eagle, began to wonder whether the deputies had lain down to take a nap, or found their business a different kind of affair from what they had expected. If they had known what point was in dispute, they would have wondered what room there was for argument, as any man among them could have told what he was paid two years before, and what now. They all knew that they were now paid by Mortimer and Rowe, only three and fourpence per one thousand hanks, while some time before, they had had upwards of four shillings. How, they would have asked, could there be any doubt as to whether wages were lowered?

Clack was profuse in his expressions of astonishment at the stupidity of those who made

a question of so plain a matter; but his wonder did no more towards settling the point than the shuffling of the chairman, who did not understand the true state of the case, and could therefore render no service in throwing light upon it.

If it had not been for Mr. Wentworth, and one or two more who held his views, nothing at all would have been done.

"Nobody doubts," observed Wentworth, "that you now take so many shillings less than you took five years ago; but that matters nothing to you or to us."

The chairman and Clack stared in about an equal degree.

"My dear sir, that is the very point," said the one.

"I always thought you had had a heart to feel for the poor," cried the other.

"I beg your pardon," said the gentleman quietly, "it is not, sir, the point in dispute, and I trust, Clack, my observation does not carry any great cruelty in it. If a penny a week would enable a man to buy all necessaries for himself and his family, and if a pound would do no more, would it signify to any man whether his wages were a penny or a pound?"

"Certainly not; but who ever heard of such wonderful pennies?"

"I have heard of shillings which you might think nearly as wonderful as such pennies: shillings which would buy more than twice as much at one time as at another."

"To be sure," said Clack, laughing con-

temptuously, "every child knows that the price of bread and other things rises and falls."

"Very well. Your concern is about how much of bread and other things you get in return for your labour, and not how many shillings. Shillings are of no value to you but for what they buy. If half the money in the kingdom were to be carried off by fairies this night, so that you could have only half your present nominal wages, you would be no worse off than at present. The same quantity of food and clothing would be in the market, and you would get as much for sixpence as you now get for a shilling. This is why I said the nominal amount of your wages mattered little. I said nothing about the real amount."

"But you do not deny, sir," said Allen, "that our real wages are less than they were?"

"I am afraid it is as true as that our profits are less. There is less surplus remaining over our manufacture for us to divide. If this division were made in kind, instead of your being paid in money in advance, you would see the real state of the case,—that we cannot afford higher wages."

"In kind! Lord, sir," cried Clack, "what should we do with a bundle of yarns on a Saturday night? what baker or grocer would take them?"

"None, I dare say; and therefore, for the convenience of the parties, payment for labour is made in money; but it is not the less true that your wages consist of the proportion you receive

of the return brought by the article you manufacture. You know how the value of this return varies; how, when an article is scarce, it brings in a large return, and how, when it is plentiful, our customers give less for it; and you must therefore see how your wages vary independently of our will."

"But whose doing is it, sir, that the return varies so much?"

"It is partly your doing; I mean that of those who bring labour to market. We masters have nothing to do with the quantity of labour brought to sale any further than to purchase it. If you bring so much as to reduce its price too far, whose fault is that?"

"To be sure we cannot expect you to pay high, when you can purchase labour cheap," said Allen, "any more than we would give sixpence for a loaf, if we could get as good a one for fivepence."

"If," observed one of the masters, "you brought only half the present quantity of labour to us, we must, whether we liked it or no, pay double for it. If you choose to bring up large families who will in turn rear large families to the same occupation, it is a necessary consequence that wages will fall to the very lowest point."

"What do you call the lowest point?"

"That at which the labourer can barely subsist. If he cannot subsist, he cannot labour, of course. If he can do more than merely subsist, his wages are not at the lowest point."

"Ours are so now," said Gibson, despondingly.

"Not exactly so," replied the manufacturer. "Don't fancy that I wish them lower, or would not make them higher if I could; but I cannot allow that they are at the lowest. Do you know no Irish hand-loom weavers who make only four shillings a week?"

"Poor creatures! yes; but how do they live? Crowded together on straw, with mere rags to cover them, and only half as much food as they could eat. It is dreadful!"

"It is; and God forbid we should see many more sinking down into such a state! I only mentioned their case to show you that your wages may still fall, if the labourers' proportion of the returns to capital is still further divided among a number. Upon the proportion of your labour to our capital depends the rise and fall of wages through the whole scale of payment."

"What would you call the highest rate?" inquired Allen.

"The greatest possible proportion of the return that the capitalist can spare, so as to leave it worth his while to manufacture; and this highest rate is, of course, paid only when labour is difficult to be had."

"We cannot wait till that time," said Clack. "If we waited till a war or a fever carried off part of our numbers, it would do little good; for there are plenty of young ones growing up. We must bestir ourselves and see if a strike will not do as well. The plague would no doubt be more

acceptable to gentlemen, as long as it did not stop their manufacture, like a strike; but the poor must raise themselves by such means as are in their own hands, and not wait for a judgment of Providence."

"I quite agree with you," said Mr. Wentworth. "Providence would have men guide themselves by its usual course, and not by uncommon accidents. But I doubt whether a strike is one of the means which will gain your point. It will leave your case worse than in the beginning, depend upon it. A strike works the wrong way for your interest. It does not decrease your numbers, and it does decrease the capital which is to maintain you."

Clack would hear nothing against a strike. Let the masters all give the same wages as Elliott, or prepare for a strike. Rather to silence the orator than with hope of much benefit from the observation, Gibson said that a pernicious multiplication of hands took place from the big piecers being allowed to spin. The masters for the most part liked that they should, because they soon got to employ them to spin at less wages; and too many of the men liked it, also, because it saved them trouble: and some would even sit down to read, while their piecers were looking after the wheels; but it seemed to him very hard that good spinners should be sometimes out of work, while piecers were practising their business.

The masters thought that any regulation of the kind Gibson wished for, would only have a slight effect for a short time; it could not permanently

keep down the spinning population to the number required to ensure sufficient wages.

Clack would not be diverted any longer from the plain answer to his plain question, would Messrs. Mortimer and Rowe raise their wages to Elliott's rate? Rowe took a long pinch of snuff to avoid answering. Mortimer sat bolt upright with his arms folded, and replied, "Certainly not." Not a word more could be got out of him. Others of the masters tried to mediate, proposing that Elliott and Mortimer should meet half-way, that is, at Mr. Wentworth's rate: but this proposal was rejected by all parties. Elliott said he left these things to the people under him; but he believed his clerk was popular with the operatives and wished for no change any more than himself; so that he should not reduce. Mortimer would not be dictated to by a mob; and the representatives of this 'mob' declared their intention of calling Wentworth to account, when they had done with Mortimer, and that his rate must not therefore be proposed for adoption. And thus the matter was no nearer being settled than before.

"Pray is it true," inquired Mortimer, "that you have talked of rooting me out?"

"Such a thing has been mentioned in private, sir," replied Allen, "but immediately scouted. It was never proposed at any public meeting, and will not be mentioned again I dare say."

"So! you have more prudence than I gave you credit for. I almost wish you had made the trial, that you might end by learning your own

place. You would soon have known what comes of dictating to us."

This was a signal for Clack to renew his oratory. The peace-makers on both sides found it was time to separate, as there seemed no chance of coming to any agreement. The three men made their bow and withdrew,—Allen with a heavy heart, leaving the masters to agree that the affair must be gone through with firmness and temper; that is, some were for firmness, and some for temper. Mortimer was annoyed at being exposed to annoyance from people so much beneath him; and Wentworth and others thought that the shortest way to a good issue was to regard the claims of the people with respect, their mistakes with gentleness, and their distresses with compassion.

Before Allen could speak a word in reply to the inquiries of his eager companions, Clack began in a strain of indignation to pronounce him a trimmer, for having answered Mortimer as he did about the proposal to root him out. The men being disposed at the moment to listen to everything that regarded the punishment of Mortimer, were hard upon Allen, though not so abusive as Clack. Allen kept his temper, stood the brunt of that to which his rectitude of principle exposed him, stayed till the business of the evening was finished, and then pondered, on his way home, the hard chance by which he was exposed to the displeasure of the masters, the unreasonableness of his comrades, and the timid complaints of his wife. Allen was not made for ambition.

Before the operatives separated, it was agreed that all employed at a lower rate of wages than Elliott's should turn out the next morning, except the children, whose maintenance would cost so much that it was desirable they should earn as long as allowed to do so. Meetings were to be held from day to day, first to appoint a fresh committee, and afterwards to take measures for securing assistance from fellow-labourers at a distance.

Bray, who had taken care that the meeting should not want for harmony of one kind at least during its sitting, betook himself at its close to the York Hotel, just when the masters were dispersing, and with some degree of impudence stated his desire to be impartial, and his readiness to drum the gentlemen home, if they would please to marshal themselves, as he had played in front of the men in the morning. Elliott called for a waiter to turn the fellow away, and Wentworth observed that he feared his travels had not improved the quality of his wit.

Chapter VI.

NIGHT AND MORNING.

"How is Martha?" was Allen's first inquiry on meeting his wife at the head of the stairs. Martha had been asleep when he had returned in

the middle of the day; for it was now her turn for night-work at the factory, and what rest she had must be taken in the day. Her mother said that her lameness was much the same; that she had seen Mr. Dawson, the apothecary, who pronounced that rest was what her weak limbs most required; and that as perfect rest was out of the question, her mother must bandage the joints while the child was at her work, and keep her laid on her bed at home. Here was the difficulty, her mother said, especially while Hannah was with her, for they were both fond of play when poor Martha was not too tired to stir. She was now gone to her work for the night.

The little girl repaired to the factory, sighing at the thought of the long hours that must pass before she could sit down or breathe the fresh air again. She had been as willing a child at her work as could be till lately: but since she had grown sickly, a sense of hardship had come over her, and she was seldom happy. She was very industrious, and disposed to be silent at her occupation; so that she was liked by her employers, and had nothing more to complain of than the necessary fatigue and disagreeableness of the work. She would not have minded it for a few hours of the day; but to be shut up all day, or else all night, without any time to nurse the baby or play with her companions, was too much for a little girl of eight years old. She had never been so sensible of this as since her renewed acquaintance with Hannah. This night, when the dust from the cotton made

her cough, when the smell and the heat brought on sickness and faintness, and the incessant whizzing and whirling of the wheels gave her the feeling of being in a dream, she remembered that a part of Hannah's business was to walk on broad roads or through green fields by her father's side, listening to the stories he amused her with, and to sit on a stile or under a tree to practice a new tune, or get a better dinner than poor Martha often saw. She forgot that Hannah was sometimes wet through, or scorched by the sun, as her complexion, brown as a gipsy's, showed; and that Hannah had no home and no mother, and very hard and unpleasant work to do at fairs, and on particular occasions. About midnight, when Martha remembered that all at home were probably sound asleep, she could not resist the temptation of resting her aching limbs, and sat down, trusting to make up afterwards for lost time, and taking care to be on her feet when the overlooker passed, or when any one else was likely to watch her. It is a dangerous thing, however, to take rest with the intention of rousing oneself from time to time; and so Martha found. She fairly fell asleep after a time, and dreamed that she was attending very diligently to her work; and so many things besides passed through her mind during the two minutes that she slept, that when the overlooker laid his hand upon her shoulder, she started and was afraid she was going to be scolded for a long fit of idleness. But she was not harshly spoken to.

"Come, come, child; how long have you been asleep?'

"I don't know. I thought I was awake all the time." And Martha began to cry.

"Well, don't cry. I was past just now, and you were busy enough; but don't sit down; better not, for fear you should drop asleep again."

Martha thought she had escaped very well; and winking and rubbing her eyes, she began to limp forward and use her trembling hands. The overlooker watched her for a few moments, and told her she was so industrious in general that he should be sorry to be hard upon her; but she knew that if she was seen flagging over her work, the idle ones would make it an excuse to do so too. Martha curtsied, and put new vigour into her work at this praise. Before he went on in his rounds, the overlooker pointed to the window and told her morning was come.

It was a strange scene that the dawn shone upon. As the grey light from the east mingled with the flickering, yellow glare of the lamps, it gave a mottled dirty appearance to everything; to the pale-faced children, to the unshaved overlooker, to the loaded atmosphere, and even to the produce the of wheels.

When a bright sunbeam shone in through the window, thickened with the condensed breath of the work-people, and showed the oily steam rising through the heated room, the lamps were extinguished, to the great relief of those who found the place growing too like an oven to be much longer tolerable. The sunbeams rested now on

the ceiling, and Martha knew that they must travel down to the floor and be turned full on her frame and some way past it, before she could be released; but still it was a comfort that morning was come.

She observed that the overlooker frequently went out and came back again, and that there was a great deal of consultation among her betters as the hours drew on. A breath of fresh air came in now and then from below, and news went round that the gates were already open, two hours earlier than usual. Presently the tramp of heavy feet was heard, like that of the weavers and spinners coming to their daily work. Martha looked up eagerly to the clock, supposing that the time had passed quicker than she had been aware of; but it was only four o'clock. What could bring the people to their work so early? They could scarcely have mistaken the hour from the brightness of the morning, for it had now clouded over, and was raining a soaking shower. More news went round. Those who had arrived had barely escaped being waylaid and punished for coming to work after a strike had been proclaimed. They had been pursued to the gates and very nearly caught, and must now stay where they were till nightfall, as they could not safely appear in broad daylight, going to and returning from their dinners. Many wondered that they had ventured at all, and all prophecied that they must give up to the will of the Union if they wished to be safe. The overlooker, finding much excitement prevailing on the

circulation of the news, commanded silence, observing that it was no concern of any of the children present. There was no strike of the children, and they would be permitted to go and come without hinderance. Martha determined to get away the first moment she could, and to meet her father, if possible, that he might not encounter any troublesome people for her sake.

Allen was watching the moment of release as anxiously for his little daughter as she could have done for herself, and he was to the full as weary as she. On the previous evening he had carried home paper and pens, preferring to write the necessary letters at his own dwelling to spending the night at the Spread-Eagle. He got his wife to clear and wipe down the deal table, when she had put all the children to bed; and then he sat down to compose a pattern letter, stating the circumstances which had led to a strike, and urging an appeal to their fellow-workmen in distant places for aid in the struggle which might be deemed a peculiarly important one. Having tolerably well satisfied himself that the letter was the proper thing, he read it to his admiring wife, who by turns smiled because she was proud of her husband, and sighed to think how perilous an office he had undertaken. She then went to bed and was soothed to sleep by the scratching of his nicely-mended pen. From this time all was silence in the apartment, except the occasional crackle when Allen folded his paper, or the cautious taking up and laying down of the snuffers when the long candle-wick

craved snuffing, or the passing squalls of the baby, who, however, allowed himself to be so quickly hushed as not materially to disturb the scribe.

When nearly twenty copies of his letter had been written, each varying a little from the original, according to the differing circumstances of those to whom it was addressed, Allen was so weary that he could write no longer without some refreshment. He put out his light, and opened the window for a minute to breathe the fresh air. The pattering of the rain wakened his wife, who roused herself to fret over the weather and wonder how Martha was to get home. Her husband told her he meant to go for the child, and would carry a shawl to wrap her up in. If Mary had known what lions were in her husband's path, she would not have let him go.

There was but one man visible when Allen went forth, and he was walking rapidly at some distance. It was Hare,—who, having never been well disposed towards a turn-out, and being supported in his dislike of it by his wife, hoped to avoid mischief and continue his earnings by going to the factory before people should be looking for him, and doing his work as usual, without talking about wages to anybody. Such devices did not suit the purposes of the Union, and were guarded against, as in all similar cases. Hare thought it just possible that he might meet with opposition, and looked as far before him as his eyes could reach; but he did not suspect an ambush on either hand. When he continued in

the same direction, however, so as to render it certain that he was making for the factory, six men issued, one by one, from opposite alleys, and formed a line across the street. Hare's name was shouted to some one still concealed, coupled with a question whether he was under contract.

Having received their answer, they coolly told their trembling fellow-workman that as he had not the pretence of any contract, and was nevertheless going to work at an unfair price, he must be ducked. They had a rope ready, and would deliver him up to be dragged through the river.

Hare turned from one to another with as large a variety of excuses as he could invent at the moment. Among the rest, he vowed that he came to watch who would be wicked enough to go to work at this same factory after having sworn to strike. He was laughed at, let off with a roll in the kennel and with being hunted part of the way home, whither he ran to seek refuge with his wife in panting terror, and presenting a woeful spectacle of disgrace. He perhaps owed it to his known cowardice that he fared no worse; as his companions were well assured he was sufficiently daunted not to attempt to cheat them a second time.

Allen proceeded at his best pace while this judgment was being inflicted on Hare, never supposing that he could be suspected of taking work unfairly; but, like all eminent men, he had his enemies, and these chose to take for granted that he could not be going to the factory with any honest design. He was seized, girded with

the dreadful rope, and hauled towards the river, though he produced the shawl, demanded time to call witnesses, and used all the eloquence he could command. His last resource was to explain that the supplies from a distance must be delayed if any harm happened to him. This occasioned a short pause, during which the night-children came forth from the factory. One of the ambush, who had some sense of justice, and wished to find out the truth about Allen, ran up to Martha, as soon as she appeared, and before she could know what had happened, and asked her whether her father was not late in coming to work this morning?

"He is not coming to work at all," said the child; "but he said he would come for me. Perhaps the rain made him stay at home."

This testimony released Allen, and disappointed some of the lads who stood round of a frolic, which they had desired to fill up the time till they could proceed to a frolic of a different kind. They looked up at the clouds, and hoped the rain would not make the parson cheat them. They were going to be married. Several had begun to think of this some time before (as lads and lasses that work together in factories are wont to do); and this seemed the very time, when they had a holiday they did not know what to do with, and were sure, they believed, of ten shillings a week as long as the turn-out should last. So, amid the warning looks of elderly friends, and the remonstrances of parents who justly thought this the worst possible time to

take new burdens upon them, several thoughtless young couples went laughing through the rain to the altar, and snapped their fingers at the clergyman behind his back because his careful enquiries brought to light no cause why the solemnization of matrimony should not proceed.

Chapter VII.

A COMMITTEE.

This was an eventful day. The masters published a placard, (not, however, signed by all,) threatening to turn off every man in their employ who should continue, after a certain day, to belong to the Union. The effect was exactly what the wisest of them expected; the turn-out became general; and the workmen, being exasperated, put new vigour into all their proceedings. Their Committee was enlarged and instructed to sit daily. Delegates were despatched on tours to distant places, with authority to tell the tale, and collect supplies; and the people at home consented to receive, for their weekly maintenance, no more than half what the young bridegrooms had settled as the probable allowance. Five shillings a week was to be allowed as long as the children remained at work; and in case of their employment failing, the sum was to be in-

creased in proportion to the capability of the fund. Weekly meetings were ordered to be held in St. George's Fields, at which any one should be welcome to attend; and it was agreed that it would be worth while going to some expense to have the proceedings of the body made public through the newspapers.

Allen was strongly in favour of having only three members of the Committee sit daily for the dispatch of common business; viz., the treasurer, secretary, and one of the other members, in rotation, for the sake of a casting vote. He knew enough of such Committees to believe that ill-natured tittle-tattle was particularly apt to find its way into them, and that quarrels between masters and men were often kept up by these means long after they would naturally have died out; and that a weekly sitting, at which the three members should be accountable for all they had done, would be sufficient for the interests of the association. The proposal gave offence, however; some supposing that he wanted to keep the power in few hands, others being unwilling to enjoy the pomp and privilege of their office no oftener than once or twice a week, and some honestly thinking that the voices of all were wanted for the decision of questions daily arising. Allen would have cared little for his motion being rejected; but, in spite of all the allowance he strove to make, it vexed him to the heart to hear evil motives assigned for every proposition which did not please the people. He often said to himself that it must be a very dif-

ferent thing to sit in a committee of gentlemen where opinions are treated as opinions, (*i. e.*, as having no moral qualities, and to be accepted or rejected according to their expediency,) and in a committee of persons who expose their deficiencies of education by calling all unkind or foolish who differ from themselves. Such remarks appeared to Allen to proceed from the same spirit which tortured martyrs in former days, and proscribed the leaders of a combination in the present.

Any one committee-meeting afforded a pretty fair specimen of all. Sometimes there were more letters than at others, sometimes larger, sometimes smaller remittances than had been expected, and occasionally none at all. Sometimes there was a dearth of gossip about the sayings and doings of the masters, and then again an abundance of news of spiteful devices and wilful misrepresentations and scornful sayings, for which there should be a sure retribution. But the same features distinguished all; and one sketch will therefore describe the whole.

A little before ten, the committee-men might be seen tending towards St. George's road. They could win their way but slowly, for they were continually waylaid by one or another who had some very important suggestion to make, or question to answer; or a piece of news to tell which would sound well in committee. Allen was the most sore beset.

"Lord! Allen, what work yours must be with such a many letters to write! Why, it must cost a mint of money to pay postage."

"All for the cause, you know. Let me go, will you? I am rather late."

"Not a clock has struck yet, man, and I want to know whether it's true about the large order that's gone to Glasgow because Elliott can't execute it?"

"All true, perfectly true. Good bye."

"Well, but have you seen Elliott since? Lord! I should love to see him look chap-fallen when he finds the power is with us."

"'Tis for us to look chap-fallen, I think," said Allen, trying to disengage his button; "where's the power if more such orders go the same way?"

"Stop, Allen, one thing more. Do you know, several of us are of a mind that it is a disgrace to the Union that Wooller, with his large family, has no more on a pay-day than Briggs."

"Briggs has a sick wife, and his children are too young to work."

"Wooller must have more, however, and that you'll find to your cost, if you don't take care. Pretty encouragement to turn out, indeed, if such a man as he is to be sacrificed to worse men than himself!"

"Let him carry his complaint to the proper place, if he is discontented. The committee ordered his allowance, and it is they must alter it, not I."

Allen now thought he had made his escape; but his gossip called after him that he had something to tell him on which the whole fate of the strike depended. Allen was all ear in a moment. It was said, and on very good authority, that the

masters would never employ a Manchester man again. They had sent to Glasgow and to Belfast, and all over England, and if they could not get workmen enough by these means, they would bring them in troops from abroad.

"Who told you this?" said Allen, laughing.

"That's between him and me," replied the gossip mysteriously; "but you may rely upon it, it is true."

"Aye, we have been told so twice a day since we turned out," said Allen; "but that is no reason why we should believe it. You might as well tell me they mean to take their mills on their backs and march over the sea to America."

"You may laugh, sir, but I'm far from as sure as you that we are not going to ruin."

"I am sure of no such thing," replied Allen. "I wish I were; but if we are ruined, it will not be by French people spinning in Chorlton Row."

A knot of smokers, each with as much to say, stood or lolled about the door of the Spread-Eagle. Allen looked at the window of the committee-room, and wished he could have got in that way; but there was no escape from the file of questioners. Several of his companions were ready to tell him that he was late, when he at length took his seat at the end of the table, and began to arrange his papers.

"I know it; but I left home half an hour since. I have been stopped by the way."

"And so you always will be. You're so soft, man, you're not fit for office if you can't say 'no.'"

Dooley, the representative of the Irish hand-loom weavers, here took up Allen's defence, urging that it would be too hard if the people out of office might not make their remarks to those who were in; and that a secretary must be as stony-hearted as the last speaker to refuse them a hearing.

"Come, come; to business," cried Allen, to stop the dispute. "But first shut the door, Brown, and make every one knock that wants to come in. If they won't obey at once, slip the bolt. We must preserve the dignity and quiet of the Committee."

"O, by all manner of means," said the Irishman, sitting down demurely at the board, and twirling his thumbs; "it puts me in mind of the way his honour set us to play when we were children——"

"I have here a letter from number three," Allen began, as if all had been silence, "who has prosecuted his journey successfully as far as Halifax, from whence he hopes to transmit, in a post or two, a sum nearly as large as was contributed by that place to the Bradford strike. It will gratify you, I am sure, to know with how much friendly anxiety our fellow-labourers watch the result of our present noble struggle; and I trust you will agree with me that their suggestions are entitled to our respectful attention. Dooley, be so good as read the letter to the Committee, while I look what must be brought forward next."

"With raal pleasure, Mr. Secretary; but first

I'll take lave to wet my throat with a little ale or spirits. It's dry work reading and advising, and a clear sin to keep so many men shut up on a summer's day with not a drop to help their wits."

"Whatever is ordered is at your own cost, remember," said Allen; "and I would recommend your going elsewhere to refresh yourself. Meanwhile, will some one else have the goodness to read the letter now under consideration?"

After much complaint and discussion, Dooley was prevailed on to be quiet and let the business go forward. Having first loaded Allen with abuse and then with praise, he tried to behave well, much in the same way as if his priest had put him under penance.

The letter in question and some others having been discussed and dismissed with due decorum, a member brought before the notice of his fellow-workmen a calumny which he believed had been widely circulated, and which was likely to impair the credit of the association, and thus to deprive them of the countenance of their distant friends and of all chance of reconciliation with the masters. It was said and believed——

A push at the door. "Who is there?"

"Only Tom Hammond."

"Learn what he wants."

Tom Hammond only thought he would look in and see whether it was a full committee-day, and how they got on: which thought only occasioned the door to be shut in his face and the delivery of an admonition to go about his own

business and leave other people to manage theirs in quiet.

"Well; what was this libel?"

It was said that the Committee had taken upon themselves to go round as inspectors, and to examine the work done by all members of the Union, and determine whether the price given for it was fair or not. Allen thought it incredible that any of the masters could have given heed to so absurd a report; but if one instance could be brought of its having been actually believed, he would be the first to propose some measure of effectual contradiction.

Clack would wish that the secretary was somewhat less inclined to make light of the information brought to the committee by some who were as likely to know what was going forward as himself. The association was not to lose its character because its secretary chose to laugh at the foul calumnies circulated against it, and which seemed anything but laughable to those who had the honour of the Union really at heart. And so forth.

The secretary begged to explain that nothing was further from his intention than to risk the good name of the association; and he must further assert that no man breathing had its honour more at heart than himself. He need but appeal to those who had heard him say but just now——And so forth.

The result was a resolution that a paper should be drawn up and presented to the masters, containing an explanation of what the office of this

committee consisted in; *viz.*:—not in determining the value of work and the rate of wages, but in managing the affairs of the turn-out after the strike had been actually made; in collecting and distributing money, and conducting the correspondence and accounts.

While Allen was consulting his companions about the wording of this letter, the rub-a-dub of a drum, accompanying shrill piping, was heard approaching from a distance, and presently the sounds of merriment from without told that Bray was among the smokers on the outside. Sometimes a rumble and screech seemed to show that the unskilful were trying his instruments, and then it appeared from the heavy tread and shuffling of feet that some were dancing hornpipes under his instructions. Dooley soon started up.

"Let us have Bray in here. He'll put a little life in us, for all this is as dull as sitting at a loom all day. We make it a point of honour, you know, not to trample on a fallen man. We let Bray come and go as if he was still one of us, poor cratur."

"Wait till he comes," said Allen. "He is thinking no more of us at this moment than we need think of him."

Dooley returned to his seat with the mock face of a chidden child, and walking as softly as if he trod on eggs, twirling his thumbs as before. He had not long to wait for his diversion. Bray suddenly made a lodgment in the window, sitting astride on the sill with his drum balanced

before him and playing with all his might, so as almost to deafen those within. When he saw the vexed countenances of two or three of the men of business, he ceased, dropped into the room, rolled his drum into a corner, flung his belled cap behind it, and said,—

"Don't scold me, pray. I'll make it all up to you. I'll have bars put up at the windows at my own cost to prevent any more idle fellows dropping in upon you when you have made all safe at the door. Moreover, I will give you the benefit of my best wisdom at this present time. What's the matter in hand?"

The Committee found their advantage in the consideration which made them admit Bray to their councils, though he had no longer any connexion with their affairs. His natural shrewdness and travelled wisdom were valuable helps upon occasion. When the terms of the disclaimer were agreed upon, Bray told them he had something of importance to say, and he should say it out as plainly as he had heard it, since he hoped they were all men, all possessed of resolution enough to bear what might be said of them, and to surrender their own gratification for the public good.

Clack was the first to give a vehement assent. With his hand on his heart, he protested that he would take his heart in his hand and give it to be toasted at the hangman's fire, if it would do the cause any good. All with different degrees of warmth declared their readiness to sacrifice or to be sacrificed. Allen's assent was given the

last and the least confidently, though without hesitation. He had inwardly flinched on first hearing Bray's portentous words, but the recollection that he had already devoted himself, restored his firmness and prepared him for whatever might be coming. He would have flinched no more, even had Bray's story concerned himself instead of another.

"I have been a pretty long round this morning," said Bray, "and among other places to Middleton, and there some good fellows and I had a pot of ale. Who should come in there but a traveller who deals, I am told, with several firms in this place. Well; he heard us talking about the strike, and not liking, seemingly, to overhear without speaking, like a spy, he joined in with us, and talked like a very sensible man,—more so than I should have expected, considering how much he has clearly been with the masters."

"You never miss a stroke at your old enemies, Bray."

"As long as they are enemies to me and such as me, I shall give them a hit at every turn. Well; this gentleman told us that he could speak to the dispositions of the masters, if any one could; and he was positive that if the men would take one step, they would soon have overtures from the masters. 'If,' said he, 'they will prevent Clack from having anything to do with their strike, the masters will begin to come round from that moment.'"

"Turn *me* out!" exclaimed Clack. "Prevent *my* having anything to do——"

Bray pursued as if Clack were a hundred miles off. "'They think that fellow,' says he, 'a vulgar speechifier that knows nothing about the matter in dispute, and is only fit to delude the more ignorant among the spinners and to libel the masters. Send him back into the crowd where his proper place is, and then you will see what the masters have to say to the Committee.'"

Allen endeavoured to stop remarks which it must be painful enough to Clack to hear under any form, and which were made needlessly offensive by Bray, who was rather glad of the opportunity of giving a set down to the mischief-maker. Clack was necessarily soon stopped also by general consent. He raged and vowed revenge in such a style that it was plainly right to dismiss him now if it had not been so before. He could no longer be trusted with any degree of power against the masters, if the Committee wished to preserve their character for impartiality. As soon as he could be persuaded to leave the room to have his case considered, it was agreed to recommend him to resign, if he wished to avoid being regularly deposed at the next public meeting. He preferred the appeal to the public; and his companions could only hope that the masters would hear of what had passed, and would take the will for the deed.

It was next proposed by a member of the Committee that a sum of money should be presented to Allen in consideration of his services; and he had the pain of hearing himself lauded at

the expense of Clack, according to what seemed the general rule, to admire one man in proportion to the contempt with which another was treated. If Rowe was railed at, Wentworth was praised; if Clack was complained of, Allen was immediately extolled. Being aware of this, Allen would have declined the gift, if for no other reason than that a fit of generosity might be transient; but he had other reasons for refusing to listen to all mention of a gift. He chose to keep his disinterestedness beyond all question; and he feared that the funds were about to decline on the whole, though liberal contributions were looked for from particular places.

To stop further argument, which he intended should be unavailing, he returned brief thanks to his companions and broke up the Committee.

Chapter VIII.

A TETE-A-TETE.

It was the policy of the Committee to hold the public meetings of the workmen on pay-days, in order that they might appear on the green refreshed and in good spirits, and thus give the masters the most favourable impression possible of their resources and of the vigour with which they meant to maintain the strike. This arrangement had not the effect of raising the

spirits of the leaders. Pay-day was an anxious and painful day to them. In addition to all the sad stories of distress which they must hear, and the discontent which they must witness, there was a perpetual dread of the fund appearing to decline, and of the confidence of the people being therefore shaken. It was frequently necessary to borrow money,—sometimes as much as a hundred pounds at a time,—on the security of what was to come in during the next week; and even those least disposed to foresight could not help asking themselves and each other what was to be done next time, if the remittances of the week should not superabound.

Allen was turning these things over in his mind as he proceeded to the Spread-Eagle on the morning of the day when Clack was expected to be dismissed from the Committee by the public voice. News was afloat which did not tend to cheer his spirits, though he thought he discerned in it a sign that the measures already taken concerning Clack were prudent. Ann Howlett, Clack's betrothed, had been taken up on a charge of breach of contract, and had been committed to prison by the magistrate. This woman having been singled out as an example seemed to indicate enmity against Clack; and if it was indeed necessary to propitiate the masters by sacrificing him, it was well that the sacrifice was offered by the Committee before the arrest of the woman instead of in consequence of it. A more painful piece of intelligence followed. Immediately after this arrest, a carrier, who was

conveying work into the country for Mortimer and Rowe, was attacked on his way out of the town, his cart ransacked, himself beaten, and the work carried off in triumph. Ten or twelve men had been concerned in the outrage; and it was acknowledged that they belonged to the Union; but Allen in vain attempted to learn who they were. His integrity was so well known, that it was understood that he would deliver the offenders up to justice, be they who they might; and therefore, though many knew, no one would tell. Mute signs and obscure hints conveyed that Clack headed the enterprise; but nothing in the shape of evidence was offered.

Mr. Rowe was standing at his window when Allen's gossips left him to pursue his way. The gentleman threw up the sash, looked cautiously up and down the street, to ascertain whether he was observed, and then mysteriously beckoned to Allen to come into the house.

"What do you want with me, sir?"

"I want a little conversation with you, that's all. Can't you come in for a quarter of an hour?"

"If I could find any one to take my place at the board," replied Allen, who thought that some overture might be coming. "If you will let me step to the Spread-Eagle or write a note, I am at your service."

The plan of writing a note was preferred, on condition that Allen should not say whence or why he wrote. He saw that the gentleman glanced over his shoulder, to see whether he kept

his word, and turning sharp round, held up the paper in Rowe's face, saying,

"There is honour on the part of us men, I assure you, sir, whatever suspicion there is on the part of you gentlemen. Read the note, if you please."

Rowe did as he was desired, disclaiming suspicion, of course, and getting entangled in a complimentary speech which Allen listened to very quietly, waiting, with his arms by his side, for the end of it.

As an ending did not come readily, however, the gentleman broke off in order to send the note. He gave a penny to a child in the street to carry the note to the Spread-Eagle, and run away directly without saying where he came from; and then returning, made Allen sit down and take a glass of ale,—particularly fine ale,—such capital ale that the gentleman often indulged himself in a draught with a friend.

When nothing more remained to be said about ale, Mr. Rowe sighed, and observed what a pity it was that people should fall out to their mutual injury, and that those who had power to reconcile differences should not endeavour to do so.

Allen asked what party was meant by this description.

"You," replied Rowe, shaking him warmly by the hand. "You must know, Allen, that you can do what you please in the Union; and I only wish you knew how the masters look up to you, and respect your manly, moderate con-

duct. Any proposition from you would meet with attention from both parties; if you would ——"

"I beg pardon, sir; but you forget that my propositions are before the masters already, and do not meet with attention. My propositions are those adopted by the Union——"

"Yes, yes; I know well enough what they are; but you must bring forward something new. Is there nothing else you can propose that we can support without going from our word?"

"Just tell me plainly," said Allen, "since you seem to like plain speaking: will you yourself make a concession about raising the wages to a middle point, if we yield some of our demands of equal importance?"

"Why, you see," replied Rowe, edging his chair closer, and filling Allen's glass, "I don't want to come forward the first in this kind of thing. Indeed, as a junior partner, I ought not so to commit myself. I can't be the first, you see; but I have no objection to be the second. Yes, you may, between you and me, depend upon my being the second."

"Between you and me!" exclaimed Allen, laughing. "That leaves me nothing to propose to the meeting. See now how they would laugh at me!—'My fellow-workmen, I propose that we should lower our demands because a person (I am not at liberty to say who) offers, between himself and me, to yield in part after others have yielded.' Why, sir, they would jeer me off the

stand, or bid me say to their concealed opponent, 'Thank you for nothing. If others have yielded first, we shall owe nothing to you.'"

"Well but, Allen, you don't seem to me to know the difficulty I am in, if you use my name. You don't know how unpleasant——"

"Pardon me, sir, I do know. You and I are neither of us men of nerve, Mr. Rowe, and so far, you have chosen your listener well. Clack would have laughed in your face, by this time, and been half way to the Spread-Eagle to tell the people there all that you have been saying; but I have so far a sympathy with you that I know the misery of looking round and seeing entanglement with one party or another on every side—blame from one or another sure to come. I know the longing to be somehow out of the scrape, the shrinking back with the hope of keeping out of sight, the dread of every one that comes near lest some new difficulty should be arising. I can pity you, sir, for all these feelings, for I have felt them myself."

"Have you? have you indeed?" replied Rowe, grasping his hand again. "What a sad thing it is for you, then, to be a leader of a turnout."

"I am of a different opinion, sir. Because these feelings are natural to some persons, it does not follow that they should be indulged. It will not do to indulge them, sir, believe me. We have our duties as well as men of our make on the field of battle; and we must surrender ourselves, like them, to our duties, or be dis-

graced in our own eyes. Happen what will within us or without us, it is for you and me to speak out, to act openly, and bear the consequences. You will excuse my freedom."

Another grasp of the hand, with a speech about the secretary's integrity; upon which Allen rose, saying,—

"Then as we are of one mind, sir, suppose we go together to the meeting, and say what we have to say there, instead of shut up in this parlour. I believe I can promise you a courteous hearing."

"O no, no; that is quite out of the question. I have no offer, you know, to make on behalf of the masters,—nothing to say that I should think of occupying the meeting with."

"Then you can have nothing to say to me, sir, since, as an individual, I have no power to negotiate. Good morning, Mr. Rowe."

"Stay a moment, Allen. You understand that the men are not to know of this interview; and it is of more importance still that the masters should not. Promise me, Allen."

"I can promise no such thing," said Allen, returning from the door. "I regard your consent to be the second to raise wages as a concession, and I was going to report it to Mr. Wentworth."

"For God's sake don't!"

"I must," said Allen, firmly; and all entreaty, all reproach, was in vain.

"At least, don't give up the name. The fact will do just as well without the name. Give me

your word to conceal the name till you see me again."

Out of pure compassion, Allen yielded thus far. Mr. Rowe accompanied him to the house-door, harping upon "the name, the name," till Allen turned round to say gravely,

"A promise once given is enough, sir, between honest men. I have given you my word."

"True, true, my good friend. It is only a trick I have got of repeating my sentences."

And the gentleman shut the door behind his guest, feeling very like a child who has persuaded her maid not to tell her governess who broke the china cup; knowing all the time that the mishap must come to light, and trembling every time any one goes near the cupboard.

Chapter IX.

A PUBLIC MEETING.

"How much did you fall short to-day?" inquired Allen, as he joined in with a group of committee-men going to the meeting.

"Sixty pounds; but we shall make it up before three days are over, depend upon it; and, besides, the masters will yield as soon as Clack is done for, you'll see. Wentworth is before us, going to the meeting. But what have you been about, Allen, playing truant on pay-day?"

"Preaching fortitude and giving a fillip to the faint-hearted."

"As Christian a duty as feeding the hungry and easing the poor," observed a companion. "If Allen is absent from a good deed, you may be sure he is doing a better."

There was no part of Allen's duty that he disliked more than opening the weekly meetings. The applause discomposed him. He could not, like Clack, make a deprecating flourish of the hands, or shake his head modestly, or look round with a proud smile. He was very apt to fidget, and swing his hat, and make a short, ungraceful bow. As soon as he found this out, he adopted one posture, from which he determined not to move till the thing was over. He folded his arms and dropped his head upon his breast, and so stood as if facing a gust of wind, till the clapping had sunk into silence.—This day, the clapping on his appearance was twice as long and twice as vehement as usual, Clack's former popularity being transferred to himself. Mr. Wentworth appeared in time to share his honours, and to relieve him from applause, which seemed as if it would never end. Clack would fain have appropriated both series of cheers; but he could not manage it. As soon as he began to bow and look flattered, there arose cries of "Off, off!" which strengthened into groans when he attempted to brave them. With a nervous sneer, the orator observed to those within hearing that his time would soon come, when he would carry off more cheers than any of them.

"Better put yourself under Allen's wing, if you want to be clapped," observed Mr. Went-

worth. "I conclude it was because I stood next to him that they cheered me to-day, instead of groaning, as they did a week ago. We must submit to be beholden to Allen—hey, Clack?"

With a look of ineffable contempt, the orator withdrew as far as he could from Allen, without going out of sight, while Mr. Wentworth sat down to take a pinch of snuff on the edge of the waggon in which the speakers were stationed.

The object of the meeting was to obtain the opinions of the people on certain questions to be proposed; and, in order to put Clack out of the pain of suspense, his affair was the first brought on. Allen expressed himself in the most moderate terms he could devise, saying that it sometimes happened that the usefulness of an individual was not in proportion to his zeal in the cause he had espoused, or to his desire to fulfil its duties, especially where the likings of two opposite parties had to be consulted; that it so happened, in the present case, that the individual in question did not possess the confidence of the masters, and that his remaining a member of the Committee might therefore prove an obstacle in the way of an amicable agreement. It was for the meeting to declare whether they were willing to take the chance of an accommodation by naming some substitute for Clack, who might be equally energetic in their service, and more agreeable to their employers. After a pause, and with evident effort, he added, that if the conduct of the person in question had been, in all respects, such as the Union could approve, it would have

gone hard with the committee before they would have sanctioned his removal from office; but, as it seemed too evident that the cause had received injury by his means in ways which he might be spared the pain of pointing out, they might consider themselves relieved from the perplexity of reconciling consideration for the individual with a regard to the interests of the body.

A hubbub ensued; a strong party of Clack's friends raising shouts on his behalf, while opposing cries rose on all sides of "Down with the blusterer!" "Who waylaid the carrier?" "He is none of us. The Union keeps the laws." "Law and concord! No Clack!"

Quiet was restored on Mr. Wentworth's rising to explain that his being present was not to be considered as a sign that the masters would yield on Clack's dismissal. He had no authority to confirm any such belief.

Applause,—and Clack doomed by an overwhelming majority; whereupon his supporters made their way to the waggon, agreed with him that the meeting was not worth addressing, even if he *had* been allowed to speak; and carried him off on their shoulders to fish for popularity in the streets of Manchester, while the meeting conducted its affairs as well as it could without him. So ended that matter, except that somehow Clack and his party were forestalled in their return into the town, and the walls everywhere presented, conspicuous in white chalk, the phrase which still rang in their ears, "Law and Concord! No Clack!" An extraordinary number

of little boys too seemed to have taken the fancy to mimick the action of weaving, with arm and foot, crying at the same time

" Clickity, clickity, clack,
Lay him on his back!
Clickity, clickity, clack,
Away let him pack!"

Far more decorous was the meeting in their rear, while the queries were dismissed, each in its turn.

" The case of Ann Howlett being admitted by all parties to be a hard one, (her contract being for wages which would not support her,) was her breach of contract sanctioned by the Union?"

Shouts of " No; we would have helped her to perform it!"

" If this breach of contract had been sanctioned by the Union, was it thought lawful revenge for the committal of Ann Howlett to waylay the carrier and strip his cart?"

Groans, and shouts of " No revenge!"

Some one near the cart having spoken to Allen, he put the question,—

" Supposing this attack to have no connexion with Ann Howlett's affair, does the Union sanction forcible attempts to prevent work being carried into the country?"

Answer, " No. Law and Concord for ever!"

" If the men abide by the law, and the masters are found disposed to concord, will the Union be disposed to concession?"

Mixed cries, the most distinguishable of which was, " Stick by the Union! The Union for ever!"

Mr. Wentworth and Allen exchanged nods, as much as to say, "You see"—"Yes, I see."

"Supposing the Union to be preserved entire, are its members disposed to any concession in respect of wages?"

Cries of "Equalization!"

"An equalization is, as the Committee knows, indispensable; but the point on which the Committee has not yet received your instructions is whether that equalization may be fixed below the highest rate, *viz.*, that which Elliott is now giving?"

The answers were at first hesitating, then confused, so that no one prevailed.

"Don't press for an answer yet," said Mr. Wentworth. "I may tell them something which may help their judgments."

Way was made for Mr. Wentworth, and he presented himself to speak.

"Before you put this question to the vote, let me just mention a circumstance or two that you may not be aware of, from your having been lately out of communication with the factories. There are few things that we hear more of than of th changes that all mortal things are liable to; an these changes affect the affair we have in hand, like all other affairs. We are told that every one rises from sleep in the morning a different man from him who lay down at night; there having been a waste and repair of the substance of which the bodily man is composed. In the same manner, you may find that your strike is a different thing to-day from what it was at its beginning. Some of its parts have fallen off,

and others have been added. Whether your body, having undergone this change, be the more vigorous, like a man refreshed with sleep, you know better than I. But further, whenever you return to your work, you may find a factory a very different place on re-entering from what it was on your leaving it. There has been much waste, I fear, without any repair. You know what kind of waste I refer to. You have heard of large orders, which we have been unable to execute, having been sent to Scotland and elsewhere. You know that much of our capital, which ought by this time to be returning to us again, has been for many weeks locked up in our stocks of raw material. You know that the expense of keeping on our establishments has not been repaid by the production of goods for the market; or the cost of maintaining ourselves and our families, by the profitable employment of our time and our wits. We have been consuming idly, and so have you; and thus there must needs have been great waste.—And what is it which has been thus wasted? The fund which is to maintain you; the fund out of which your wages are paid. Your strike has already lasted long enough to change our ground of dispute. You will find that the question with the masters now is, whether fewer of you than before shall be employed at the same wages, or fewer still at higher wages, or as many as before at lower wages than you have yet received. Keep on your strike a little longer, and the question will be, how many less shall be employed, at how much less.

Keep it on long enough, and the question will be entirely settled; there will be no wages for anybody. Do you understand me?"

The speaker took snuff while the murmur of disapprobation went round, and then continued.

"I do not suppose, any more than you, that we shall come to this pass, because your capital must be exhausted sooner than ours, and then you must have bread, and will come to us for work before our fund for wages is all wasted away; but the nearer you drive us to this point, the more injury you do yourselves. Let me hear your objection, friend," he continued to a man in the crowd who looked eager to speak. "Where do you think me wrong? You acknowledge that a strike is a bad thing, but sometimes necessary to obtain a good one. Refusing wages altogether for a time, is to be the means of securing better afterwards. Do I understand you right? Why, that would be very true if you had the power or were in the habit of keeping workmen and wages in proportion to each other. If the masters had more capital than was necessary to pay you all at the rate you have hitherto received, you might gain your point by a strike, not as you sometimes do now, just for a little time till the masters can shake themselves free of their engagement,—but permanently. But this is not the case. The masters' capital does not return enough to pay you all at the rate you desire. If they are to keep their capital entire, you must either take less wages, or fewer of you must take wages at all.

If you will all have the wages you desire, the capital which pays them wastes away, and ruin approaches. This is the worst event that could happen, as I am sure we shall all agree. Your alternative, therefore, is to withdraw a portion o your people from taking wages, or all to take less than you are striking for. You are not satisfied yet? (speaking to the same man.) Well, let me hear. There are places where there are no strikes, because the workmen get as high wages as they wish for? Very true; there are such places, and London is one; concerning which I heard, the other day, a case in point.

"The money wages of skilled labour in London were higher from 1771 to 1793 than was ever known. They had been raised because prices were high. They were afterwards somewhat lowered; but as prices fell in a greater proportion after the war, the real wages of skilled labour are at present higher than they had ever been. They cannot be lowered while, as at present, there is an occasional deficiency of labour, since the men would strike when most wanted by the masters, and the loss thus caused would be greater than the gain of giving lower wages. In London there are two seasons in every year; a slack season in which many workmen remain unemployed; and a busy season in which they work overhours, because there are not hands enough. Now, here, you see, lies their advantage; in the supply of labour being limited. If it was the case with them, as with you, that some of their class always remained unemployed, the

unemployed would undersell the busy, and wages would fall. Then, as here, there would be strikes; and then, as here, strikes would be of no avail. Where there are permanently fewer workmen than are wanted the men hold the power. Where there is the exact number that is wanted, the power is equal, and the contest fair. Where there are more than are wanted, even to the extent of three unemployed to a hundred, the power is in the masters' hands, and strikes must fail. Must there not be a larger surplus of unemployed labour than this in our neighbourhood, and elsewhere, since wages are fallen too low to enable the labourer to do more than barely exist? Allen, is there a silk small-ware weaver present, do you suppose? They have just struck, I find."

Proclamation was made for a silk small-ware weaver, and several held up their hands. In answer to questions, they stated that within two years their wages had been reduced forty-five per cent. Two years before, common galloon weaving was paid at the rate of 1*s.* 10*d.* per gross; it was now reduced to 1*s.* 4*d.* per gross; and it was for an addition of 2*d.* per gross that the men struck: little enough when it is considered that, in the winter season, a weaver cannot average more than twelve gross per week. As he has to pay for the hire of his loom, for winding, for candle-light, and other expenses belonging to his work, he has left only about 8*s.* a week for himself and his family.

"Could so dreadful a reduction have ever

taken place," continued Mr. Wentworth, "if you had not undersold one another? And how are the masters to help you if you go on increasing your numbers and underselling one another, as if your employers could find occupation for any number of millions of you, or could coin the stones under your feet into wages, or knead the dust of the earth into bread? They do what they can for you in increasing the capital on which you are to subsist; and you must do the rest by proportioning your numbers to the means of subsistence. But see how the masters are met! In Huddersfield the masters are doing their utmost to extend their trade; but the multitudes who are to subsist by it increase much faster. There are now thirteen thousand work-people in that place who toil for twopence half-penny a day. At Todmorden, the most skilful work fourteen hours a day for the pittance of one shilling. In the fair county of Kent there are thirty thousand who earn no more than sixpence a day. Compare this state of things with the condition of skilled labour wages in London, and see how much depends on the due proportion of labourers, and the capital by which they are to be fed. Would you could be convinced that your strike, besides occasioning vexation and ill-will between the two parties, besides inflicting distress upon yourselves, and inconvenience upon your employers, cannot but be worse than in vain!"

During the last few sentences, several persons had been engaged in conference with Bray, who

27573

leaned over a corner of the waggon to hear what they had to say. He now came forward and placed himself beside Mr. Wentworth, observing that all that had fallen from the gentleman seemed pretty true and reasonable as far as it went, but that it did not at all explain what course the people had now to pursue. It was poor comfort to tell the people that wages could not be any higher on account of their numbers, since it was not in their power to lessen those numbers.

"It is not with the view of giving present comfort," replied Mr. Wentworth, "that I represent what appears to me to be the truth: for alas! there is but little comfort in the case any way. My object is to prevent your making a bad case worse; and if it were possible, to persuade you not to prepare for your descendants a repetition of the evils under which you are yourselves suffering. All that you can now do, is to live as you best may upon such wages as the masters can give, keeping up your sense of respectability and your ambition to improve your state when better times shall come. You must watch every opportunity of making some little provision against the fluctuations of our trade, contributing your money rather for your mutual relief in hard times, than for the support of strikes. You must place your children out to different occupations, choosing those which are least likely to be overstocked; and, above all, you must discourage in them the imprudent, early marriages to which are mainly owing the distresses

which afflict yourselves and those which will for some time, I fear, oppress your children. You ask me what you must do. These things are all that I can suggest."

"But these things, sir, will not guard our children any more than ourselves from the fluctuations in trade you speak of."

"But they will prevent those fluctuations from being so injurious as they now are. The lower wages are, the more are such fluctuations felt. In India, where an average day's wages are only three-pence, the people live in the poorest possible manner,—such as the poorest of you have no idea of. Any decrease of wages, therefore, makes the more weakly of the labourers lie down and die. In Ireland, where the average is five-pence a day, there is less positive starvation than in India, but more distress on a fall of wages, than in England. In England, such fluctuations are less felt than in old days, when the people knew nothing of many things which you now call necessaries. The better the state of the people, the better able are they to stand against the changes to which all trades are liable; but the worst of it is that we are all too little inclined to foresee the effects of these changes, and to provide for them; and when we experience the necessary consequences of a change which took place twenty years before, we are apt to suppose these consequences arise from something amiss at the present time. When a demand for any article of manufacture makes labour unusually profitable, labourers provide for

a great decline of wages in future years, by bringing up large families to the same employment. During many years, that is, while their children are growing up, they feel no ill effects, and suppose that all is going on right. When a decline of wages comes, they suppose it happens from some new circumstance, and not from their own deed in overstocking the labour market. Again; it must be some time before the effects of a decline in lessening the supply of labour are felt. A part of the population perishes slowly from want and misery, and others are made prudent in respect of marriage; but by the time these checks are seen to operate, a new period of prosperity has arrived, which is ascribed by the people to accident. It is this impossibility of making the supply of labour suit the demand at a moment's notice, which makes fluctuations in trade so sensibly felt, for good or for evil, by the labourer. Since he cannot, as you say, Mr. Bray, diminish the number of workmen when trade is slack, and if he wishes his descendants not to be plunged into degradation by extreme poverty, he will do what in him lies to prevent population from increasing faster than the capital which is to support it."

Mr. Wentworth was encouraged to pursue his argumentative manner of speaking by the attention of the people near the waggon. Some of them had become a little tired of the weekly meetings at which their orators had said the same things over and over again, and were pleased to be reasoned with by one whom they

esteemed, and to obtain, by these means, a better insight into their affairs than was given them by leaders who were all of one party. The more the present meeting assumed the character of a conference, the more eagerly the most thinking men in the crowd pressed towards the waggon, and cheered the questions and replies. Those on the outskirts, who were more fond of noise and display, were at liberty to come and go as they pleased; to listen to Mr. Wentworth, or to follow Clack.

Bray now observed that population must increase rapidly indeed, as it had outstripped the increase of capital in the cotton manufacture. He believed so rapid an increase of capital had never been known before. To this Mr. Wentworth replied by asking of the crowd whether there was any one among them who had known James Hargraves. An old man stept forwards and said that he was a native of Blackburn, and had been accustomed, as a boy, to frequent Hargraves' workshop; that he remembered seeing the carpenter busy about his invention, and his own delight at having the design of the spinning-jenny explained to him by the inventor; he saw directly how eight threads could be spun instead of one, and thought it a very fine thing, and had little notion how soon it would be so much improved upon as that a little girl might work one hundred, or one hundred and twenty spindles. When was this? Why, a few years after the old king George began to reign; in 1767, he believed.

"When that king came to the throne," observed Mr. Wentworth, "the whole value of the cotton goods manufactured in this country was only 200,000*l.* a year."

"There were very few people employed in it then," interrupted the old man. "We had no factories and no towns full of cotton-spinners and weavers. My father used to take his work home to his own cottage, and grow the flax that was then used for warp in his own garden, and set my mother to card and spin the raw cotton for the weft. This, and getting the warp from Ireland, was the way till Arkwright's spinning frame came into use."

"Then was the time, said Mr. Wentworth, "that the people in China and in India had no rivals in the market for whatever was made of cotton. We owe it to these machines, and the mule-jenny, and the power-loom that came in afterwards, that though we have to bring our cotton from thousands of miles off, and though the wages in India are, as I said, only 3*d.* a day, we have beaten them in the competition, and can carry back their cotton five thousand miles, made into a cheaper fabric than they can afford. Such powers as these must make our capital grow; and the fact is that the cotton manufacture is the chief business carried on in the country, and that it has enabled us to sustain burdens which would have crushed any other people. Instead of 200,000*l.*, the annual produce of the manufacture is now more than 36,000,000*l.* We have no means of knowing how few persons were

employed sixty years ago; but it is reckoned that the manufacture now affords subsistence to more than 1,400,000 persons. This enormous population has arisen naturally enough from the rise of the manufacture; but your present condition shows that it has already gone too far; and it rests with yourselves to determine whether the evil shall be found to have increased fifty years hence. And now, Allen, you know the reason of the clause I added to your query in the arbour."

"Will our trade go on increasing?" was the next question asked.

"I hope and trust that it will, as we have got the start of our competitors abroad; but it will probably increase at a slower rate; and a succession of strikes may prove its destruction."

Here the speaker abruptly ceased, and nothing could induce him to say more. He let himself down from the waggon, and quietly made his way through the crowd, thinking perhaps that the people would draw their inferences from what he had said more freely in his absence.

The substance of Mr. Wentworth's argument, and especially the last words he spoke, left Allen and others thoughtful. They would not, on the impulse of the moment, advise a compromise with the masters; but appointed another general meeting for the next day, to take into consideration some matters of important concern.

One matter of important concern was taken into immediate consideration, however. As soon as Allen had turned his back, some men-

bers of the committee recalled the crowd for a few minutes, related how Allen had, from time to time, refused money in compensation for his services, and moved that a suit of clothes should be voted to him. This was a present which he could not refuse, if given under colour of enabling him to appear more respectably as their advocate before the masters, and would serve to make a proper distinction between such a sound friend to their cause as Allen, and such a frothy fellow as Cluck. The motion was carried by acclamation; and as all Allen's scruples were so forestalled as that he could not decline the gift, he was, before nightfall, clothed in a suit which must mark him out at the meetings as leader of the Union proceedings.

Chapter X.

HOPE DECLINING.

Alas! what is so fleeting as popularity! Allen's was in great part gone before morning. Some mischievously disposed persons, who had marked what impression had been made on the mind of the secretary by Mr. Wentworth's speech, and who had afterwards ascertained that he wished to propose a compromise with the masters, took upon themselves to make known that the favourite

secretary had turned tail and meant to betray the cause. A general gathering about the waggon of all who scorned to be betrayed was advised, in order to keep his friends at a distance and to raise a hiss with the more effect. When, confident of his reception, Allen advanced with a smiling countenance, in order to express his gratification at the mark of esteem he had received, he was startled by a burst of groans and hisses. For a moment he looked about him to see if Clack or any other unpopular person was standing near; but signs not to be mistaken convinced him too soon that he was the object of the people's dislike. He coloured scarlet, and was about to cover his face with his hands, but checked himself, and, by a strong effort, stood it out. Those who were near him saw how the papers in his hand shook; but his countenance was fixed and his attitude firm. After many vain attempts to make himself heard, he stripped off his new coat, folded it up and placed it in the hands of the committee-men near, and sent a messenger home for his working dress. This he communicated to the meeting the first moment that they would let him speak. He would not accept any gift from those to whom his services were no longer acceptable. He was ready to resign his office,—an arduous office, which they no doubt remembered had been forced upon him,—as soon as they should direct him into whose hands he should deliver his papers. In the meanwhile, he would proceed with their business, forgetful of all personal considerations.

All propositions, whether made by himself or others, tending to a compromise, were rejected, and the meeting, after a stormy discussion, in which no point was settled, broke up. The whole affair put Clack and his friends in glee, and filled wiser people with grief and apprehension of the consequences.

The first consequence was that all the children were turned off. The masters were bent on bringing the affair to a close as speedily as possible; and, being disappointed in the hope that the men would propose a compromise, endeavoured to drive them to it.

This was thought by some parents far from being the worst thing that had happened. While the Committee shook their heads over this weighty additional item of weekly charge, many tender mothers stroked their children's heads and smiled when they wished them joy of their holiday, and bade them sleep on in the mornings without thinking of the factory bell.—It was some days before the little things got used to so strange a difference from their usual mode of life. Some would start up from sound sleep with the question, "Father, is it time?" Some talked in their sleep of being too late, and went on to devour their meals hastily, as if their time was not their own.—It would have amused some people and made others melancholy to watch the sports of these town-bred children. One little girl was seen making a garden;—that is, boring a hole between two flints in a yard with a rusty pair of scissors and inserting therein a

daisy which by some rare chance had reached her hands. Others collected the fragments of broken plates and teacups from the kennels, and spread them out for a mock feast where there was nothing to eat. The favourite game was playing at being cotton-spinners, a big boy frowning and strutting and personating the master, another with a switch in his hand being the overlooker, and the rest spinners or piecers, each trying which could be the naughtiest and get the most threats and scolding. Many were satisfied with lolling on the stairs of their dwellings and looking into the streets all day long; and many nursed their baby brothers and sisters, sitting on the steps or leaning against the walls of the street. Hannah Bray, when not abroad with her father, took pains to stir up her little neighbours to what she called play. She coaxed her father into giving them a ball, and tried to teach the children in the next yard to play hide and seek; but she often said she never before saw such helpless and awkward people. They could not throw a ball five feet from them, or flung it in one another's faces so as to cause complaints and crying-fits. In hiding, they always showed themselves, or came out too soon or not soon enough, or jostled and threw one another down; and they were the worst runners that could be conceived. Any one of them trying to catch Hannah looked like a duck running after a greyhound. Hannah began with laughing at them all round; but observing that her father watched their play with tears in his eyes, she afterwards contented

herself with wondering in silence why some children were so unlike others.

The affairs of all concerned in the strike looked more and more dismal every day. There were more brawls in the streets; there was less peace at home; for none are so prone to quarrel as those who have nothing else to do, and whose tempers are at the same time fretted by want. All the men who were prone to drink now spent hour after hour at the alehouse, and many a woman now for the first time took to her "drop of comfort" at home. Many a man who had hitherto been a helper to his wife and tender to his children, began to slam the door behind him, after having beaten or shaken the little ones all round, and spoken rough words to their trembling mother. While she, dashing away her tears, looked for something to do, and found one thing that she would wash if she had fuel and soap, and another that she would mend if she had material and cotton.—Now was the time to see the young woman, with the babe in her arms, pushing at the curtained door of the dram-shop, while her husband held it against her,—he saying, —"Well, I tell you I'm coming in five minutes; I shan't be five minutes,"—and she plaintively replying, "Ah, I know, you always say so."—Now was the time to see the good son pacing slowly to the pawnbroker's to pledge his aged mother's last blanket to buy her bread. These were the days when the important men under the three balls civilly declared, or insolently swore, that they could and would take no more goods in

pawn, as their houses were full from top to bottom, and there was no sale for what they had encumbered themselves with. Never before had they been so humbly petitioned for loans,—a mother shewing that her winter shawl or her child's frock would take very little room,—or a young girl urging that if a pawnbroker did not want her grandmother's old bible he could get more for it at a book-stall than she could. These were the times for poor landlords to look after their rents, and for hard landlords to press for them. These were the days for close scrutiny to be made by the Union Committee whether men's wives were really lying-in, and whether each really had the number of children he swore to; and, therefore, these were the times when knaves tried to cheat and when honest men were wounded at having their word questioned. Now was the time when weak-minded men thought themselves each worse off than his neighbour. Many landlords were pronounced the hardest that ever owned two paltry rooms; many an applicant was certain the committee had been set against him by some sneaking enemy. In the abstract it was allowed, however, that the sneakers had the most to bear. Hare, for one, was in the depth of distress. Opposition was made, week after week, to his having any relief from the committee because he was not a hearty member of the Union; and on one occasion, when he had with the utmost difficulty obtained an extra shilling for his lying-in wife, and had failed in his plea that he was dunned for rent, he found on

returning home that his landlord had sent in the officers during his abrence, who had taken away all the little he possessed, but the mattress on which his wife lay. It was laid on the floor, the bedstead being gone; and the children and their mother were left crying within four bare walls.—Allen, to whose knowledge this hard case was brought, could do little to relieve it; but he almost succeeded in convincing his nervous wife that their own sufferings were light in comparison. Yet they had many painful sacrifices to make,—the more painful to Allen because his wife was not convinced that they were necessary. She urged that he might now ask for some of the money the Committee had formerly offered him, since his services had not been repaid even in empty good-will, to the degree that he deserved. It was his duty, she thought, to demand more than the common weekly allowance; and the least he could do for his children was to take the suit of clothes back again which he had thrown away in a pet. Failing in her arguments, she had recourse to two measures,—one of action and the other of persuasion. She went secretly to the Committee, and asked in her husband's name for the clothes, which she sold on her way home, trying to persuade herself that she was only doing a mother's duty in providing her children with bread; and then she assailed her husband on the subject of taking work at the master's prices. She knew that he now wished for a compromise and thought the strike had been continued too long, and she

would not see why he was bound to wait till the Union viewed the matter as he did. She thought it very cruel to talk of honour, and very absurd to plead duty when he knew that his family were in want, and could not deny that it was not by his own choice that he had filled so conspicuous a station. It made Allen very miserable to hear her talk in this manner, sobbing between almost every word she said; especially when little Martha looked wistfully from one to the other, not understanding the grounds of the dispute, but hoping that it would end in father's leaving off walking about the room in that manner, and in mother's stopping her sobs, and in there being something better than those nasty potatoes for dinner. Once or twice she tried to make her bulfinch sing so loud that they could not hear one another speak; but this did not do, for her mother twitched off her apron and flung it over the cage, so that the poor bird cowered down in a corner for the whole day afterwards.

One morning when Allen had persuaded his wife that he was immovable, and that the best thing she could do was to go out and buy some potatoes with what money they had, he came and leaned over the table to see Martha feed her bird.

"You are as fond of that bird as ever, Martha."

"Yes,—and I have so much time to teach him things now."

"Had you rather play with him or be at the factory all day?"

"I don't know. My knees are so much better

since I have been at home, and I like playing with Billy; but mother has got to cry so lately; and, father, we are all so tired of potatoes, we don't know how to eat them."

"Poor child! I wish we could give you anything better. But, Martha, do you think you could bear to stay at home without Billy?"

Martha's countenance fell.

"You see, my dear child, we have sold almost everything we have; and when we can scarcely get food for ourselves, it does not seem to me right to keep animals to feed. This was why I sold the dog so many weeks ago."

"But, father, it is only just a halfpenny now and then. Mother has always found me a halfpenny now and then for Billy."

"A halfpenny is as much to us now, child, as a guinea is to some people; besides we could get money by Billy. Ah! I knew it would make you cry to say so."

And he left her and walked about the room in the way which it always frightened Martha to see. She sobbed out a few words,—

"I can't—I can't help crying, father, but I don't mean—I wish you would take Billy and sell him."

"Listen to me, my dear child," said Allen sitting down by her, and putting his arm round her waist. "You were always a very good little girl in working industriously as long as you had work. Now you cannot earn money by working, but you can get some by giving up your bird. Now, you know I always tried to make you as comfortable as I could when you earned

money, and I promise you, that I will do the same if you will let me sell your bird. The very first money that I can properly spare, when better days come, shall go to buy you a bird, and this very bird if we can get it back again."

Martha thanked him, and said the bird should go for certain; but if this very bird could not be got back again, she would rather have a triangle like Hannah's, and then, she thought, they might all grow rich. Allen smiled and said they would see about that when the time came; in the meanwhile, if Billy was to go, the sooner the better, and all the more as she had just cleaned the cage; and he took his hat.

Martha struggled with her tears, and asked if she might go too. Her father thought she had better not; but she said nobody could make Billy sing all his songs so well as herself; so her father kissed her, and let her follow him down stairs, asking Field's wife who happened to be in good humour, to have an eye to the children till their mother came home.

It was a sad trial to Martha to hear the bird-fancier speak slightingly of her pet, and remark that the cage was very shabby. She had a great mind at first to make Billy seem dull, which she knew how to do: but remembering that this would punish nobody but her father, she put away the evil thought, and made Billy sing his best songs in his clearest tone. The bargain was made; her father bade the bird-fancier pay the money into her hand, and whispered that he wished he had anything which would sell for so

much. When they were on the threshold, she once more turned round. The man was twirling the cage in a business-like manner, between his hands. "O, once more!" cried Martha, running back. Once more Billy fluttered at the sight of her, and put out his beak between the wires to meet her lips; and then she went away without looking back any more. Every day for the next fortnight, however, little Martha lingered about the bird-fancier's door, doing all she could without being observed, to set Billy singing. One day she was remarked by her parents to be very silent; and after that she went out less. She had missed Billy, though his empty cage still hung in the shop; and having made bold to ask, had found that he was sold to a country customer; really gone for ever. This hope destroyed, Martha tried to comfort herself, as she had proposed, with visions of a triangle.

Chapter XI.

FINAL DELIBERATION.

The spirits of the people were sunk, not only by poverty, but by a more bitter disappointment than had attended any former strike. The Combination Laws having formerly been the great object of dread and hatred, it had been too hastily supposed that the repeal of these laws would

give all that was wanted; whereas the repeal only left the people free to make the best bargain they could for their labour, without its having any thing to do with the grounds of the bargain. The repeal could not increase the supply of capital, or diminish the supply of labour; it could not therefore affect the rate of wages.

One more event was looked to with hope; the arrival of the delegates who had travelled in search of support. They had remitted money as they had received it, and the remittances had fallen off much of late; but it was still hoped that the messengers might bring such assurances of sympathy and support, as might justify the people in holding out a little longer. These men, who returned nearly all at the same time, were met some miles out on the road, greeted with cheers, carried to the Committee-room, and with difficulty left alone with the Committee to tell their business.

These men brought advice and intelligence so various as might have perplexed the most discerning and prudent of all managers of public affairs. There were exhortations from some places to hold out to the very last shilling; and from others to retreat, while retreat could be managed with honour. Some distant friends gave them a kindly warning to look for no more contributions from that quarter; and others were sorry to send so little at present, but hoped to raise such and such sums before they should be much wanted. Some sent word that it had always been a bad case which they could not

in conscience support, while so many more promising needed help; others declared that if ever there was a righteous cause, this was it, and that they should brand with the name of traitor the first who quailed. While the members of the Committee sighed and inquired of one another what they were to think of such opposite advice, and each delegate was vehement in urging the superior value of that which he brought, Allen proposed that they should abide by the advice of the London delegates, who had been in communication with persons who understood more of the matter in hand, than any who occupied a less central situation. All agreed to this, and the consideration of the matter was deferred till the next morning, when the delegates were expected to have arrived from London.

Every member of the Committee was in his place the next morning, and the expected messengers appeared at the foot of the table, and delivered in their report, which was brief enough. Their London friends believed their strike to be in a hopeless condition, and advised their making the best terms they could with their masters, without any further waste of time and capital. Not that all combinations were disapproved of by their London advisers; there were cases in which such union was highly desirable, cases of especial grievance from multiplication of apprentices, or from unfair methods of measuring work, or from gross inequality of wages, &c.; but for a general and permanent rise of wages, no strike could ultimately prevail, where there was a permanent

proportion of unemployed labour in the market. A proportion of three per cent. of unemployed labour must destroy their chance against the masters.

"Just what Wentworth told us," observed a committee-man. "Pray did you inquire whether it is possible to get a rate of wages settled by law?"

"Of course, as we were instructed so to do; and the answer is what you probably expect,—that unless the law could determine the amount of capital, and the supply of labour, it cannot regulate wages. The law might as well order how much beef every man shall eat for his daily dinner, without having any power to supply cattle. If there be not cattle enough, men cannot have law beef. If there be not capital enough, men cannot have law wages."

"Besides," observed the other delegate, 'wages-laws involve the same absurdity as the combination laws we are so glad to have got rid of. Every man who is not a slave has a right to ask a price for his labour; and if one man has this right, so have fifty or fifty thousand. What is an innocent act in itself, cannot be made guilt by being done by numbers; and if Government treats it as guilt, Government treats those who do it as slaves. Government then interferes where it has no business. This was the argument in the case of the combination laws, and it holds in this case too: Government is neither buyer nor seller, and has nothing to do with the bargain; and having nothing to do with it, could

neither pass a just wages-law, nor enforce it when passed, any more than in the case of the combination laws, which we all know to have been unjust and perpetually evaded."

As it was now clear that the turn-out must come to a speedy end, the committee decided to waste no more time in discussion, but to proceed to immediate action. Allen begged to produce the accounts, which were balanced up to the present day, and the sight of which would, he thought, quicken their determination to let all get work who could. He had for some time found it difficult to get a hearing on the subject of the accounts, as his brethren were bent on holding out, and would listen to nothing which opposed their wishes; but they were now completely roused. "How much have we left?" was their first question.

"Left!" exclaimed Allen. "You know I have been telling you for this fortnight past that we are deficient 70*l.*, without reckoning the bills for advertisements, which had not then come in, and which, I am sorry to say, swell the amount considerably."

This declaration was received with murmurs, and on the part of some, with loud declarations that there must have been mistake or bad management.

Allen passed his hand over his forehead, while enduring the bitter pang caused by this outcry; but he recovered himself instantly.

"There are the accounts," he said. "See for yourselves whether there has been any mistake,

and bring home to me, if you can, your charge of bad management. You pressed the task upon me in the first instance against my will; you referred it to my disinterestedness to resume it, when, fearing that I had lost the confidence of the people, I would have resigned it. At your call, I have done my best, and—this is my reward!"

There was a cry of "Shame, shame!" and two or three friends rose in turn to say for Allen what he was too modest to say for himself; that the unthankful office had been repeatedly forced upon him, because there was no other man who could discharge it so well; that he had never been detected in a mistake, never found in the rear of his business, never accepting fee or reward, never—

This eulogium was interrupted by objections. He *had* erred in involving the Union with the editor of a newspaper, who now unexpectedly brought an enormous charge for the insertion of notices, intelligence, &c., which it had been supposed he was glad to print gratuitously. Allen *had* also claimed fee and reward in a way which, to say the best of it, was shabby.

Allen calmly related the facts of the transaction with the editor, leaving it to his judges to decide whether the misunderatanding arose from carelessness on his part, or from some other cause. As to the other charge, what fee or reward had he taken?

"The clothes, the clothes!" was the cry. "To send for them privately to sell, after pre-

tending to give them back in the face of the people. Fie! Shabby!"

Allen looked on his thread-bare dress with a smile, supposing this a mistake which a moment would clear up. He went to the press belonging to the committee, where the clothes had been deposited, and flung open the doors. He looked very naturally surprised at their having disappeared, and turned round with an open countenance to say,

"I see how it is. Some dishonest person has used my name to obtain possession of the clothes. I give you my word of honour that I have never seen the clothes, or known that they were not here, since the hour that I gave them back in the face of the people."

All believed him, and some had consideration enough to command silence by gesture; but before it could take effect, the fact was out, that Allen's own wife was the "dishonest person." While he silently walked to the window, and there hid his face in his hands, his friends called on business which attracted attention from him. It was pay-day, and what was to be done? What funds were in hand?

Allen returned to his seat to answer this question; and, as all were just now disposed to do as he pleased, he carried his point of honesty, and obtained authority to lessen the allowance one-half, and give advice to every applicant to attend the afternoon meeting for the purpose of voting for the dissolution of the strike.

Of these applicants, some were glad, and some

were sorry to receive the advice of the pay-master; but there was a much greater unity of opinion about the reduction of the allowance. Some murmured, some clamoured, some silently wept, some sighed in resignation; but all felt it a great hardship, and wondered what was to become of them either way, if it was true, as Mr. Wentworth had said, that the wages-fund of the masters and the Union-fund of the men were wasting away together. Some were ready with bad news for Allen in return for that which he offered to them.

"You will be worst off, after all, Allen; for there is not a master that will give you work."

"Did you hear, Allen, what Elliott said about you? He hopes you will go to him for work, that he may have the pleasure of refusing you."

"Mortimer has got a promise out of his cowardly partner, that he will not let you set foot on the premises, Allen, on account of the part you have taken.'

"They say, Allen, that you are a marked man in Manchester, and that no master in any trade will take you in among his men. What do you think of doing, I wonder?"

This question Allen could not have answered if he had wished it. It was again put to him by his wife, who waited for him in the street to tell him through her tears all the evil-bodings which a succession of Job's comforters had been pouring into her ears since the news of the probable dissolution of the strike had got wind. "What

do you think of doing, I wonder?" was still the burden of her wail.

"Do you know that man?" replied her husband, pointing to a wasted and decrepit man who was selling matches; "that man was once a well-paid spinner. He lost his health in his employment, and now, at forty years of age, is selling matches from door to door. He has submitted to God's will. I too will submit to sell matches, if it be God's will that I should lose my good name as innocently as that man has lost his health."

"I told you how it would be. I told you—" cried Mary.

"I too foresaw it, Mary, and prepared myself for much;—but not for all."

He reproached her no further for the injury she had done to his good name than by declaring his unalterable will that not an article should be purchased by her beyond a bare supply of daily food till the clothes were bought back again and restored to the Committee, or their full value, if they could not be recovered.

Chapter XII.

HOPE EXTINCT.

There had been a lingering hope among some who would fain have stood out longer, that this day's post would have brought the wherewithal

to build up new expectations and prolong the struggle. The wiser ones had resolved that not even the receipt of 200*l.* should shake their determination to return to work; but there was no question about the matter, for no money came.—A prodigious amount of business was done in the few hours preceding the final meeting. The masters met and settled that they would give no more than the medium wages,—that is, the rate given by Wentworth; Elliot carelessly consenting to lower his, and Mortimer being with difficulty persuaded to raise his. Rowe was consulted only as a matter of form, and the other firms had to make slight differences or none at all. They agreed to yield the point of their men belonging to the Union, since it appeared vain to contest it while of importance, and needless when not so. —The men settled that they must agree to a medium rate of wages, and make what they could of having obtained an equalization, such as it was, and of being permitted to adhere to the Union. —Clack agitated for his own private interest,—to get himself appointed to some salaried office in the Union, as he was no more likely to obtain employment from the masters than Allen.—So much was settled beforehand as to leave little to be done at the meeting but to make a public declaration of agreement.

With dark countenances and lagging steps the people came,—not in proud procession, with banners and music and a soldier-like march, but in small parties or singly, dropping into the track from by-streets and lanes, and looking as if they

were going to punishment rather than to consultation. There was a larger proportion than usual of ragged women and crying babies; for, as the women had been all along opposed to the strike, they were sensible of a feeling of mournful triumph in seeing it dissolved. Bray was present, without his pipe and his bells, for this was no time for lively music; but he carried his drum to be used as a signal for silence if the speakers should find any difficulty in obtaining a hearing. He beat a roll between each proposition submitted and agreed to; and thus did his last service to the turn-out he had watched from its commencement.

Proposed:—That as the masters are represented to be inclined to concession, the men shall do their part towards promoting an adjustment of their differences, agreeing to take such and such a rate of wages, provided that the masters pay all alike, and that the men be not disturbed in their peaceable adherence to the Union.—Agreed.

Proposed: that the men shall set apart a portion of their weekly earnings, as soon as able to do so, and in proportion to the size of their families, in order to liquidate the debt incurred on account of the strike now about to be closed. —Murmurs.

Allen came forward to state the gross amount of subscriptions and expenses, intimating that the account-books would be left at the Committee-room for one month, open to the inspection of all who could prove themselves to belong

to the Union. It would be seen through what unavoidable circumstances a debt had been incurred, and how essential it was to the honour of the body that it should be liquidated as soon as possible.

No reasonable exception could be made to any of the items of expenditure. The people could only wonder that there should be such crowds of children to receive pay, so many lying-in women to be relieved, so many sick persons to be aided, and so much to pay for printing and advertising. They could not deny that the expenses of the Committee had been very small.

This explanation finished, Allen's part was done. He had neither faults of his own nor favours of theirs to acknowledge. He spoke not of himself, but, when he had rendered his account, gravely made his bow and retired.

Clack then came forward, and, supported by a powerful party of friends near the waggon, succeeded in obtaining the public ear. With more success than delicacy, he enlarged upon his public services, pleaded his betrothment to one who was now suffering under the persecution of the masters, as a title to their support, as well as the certainty that he should not again be employed by any firm in Manchester. He declared that were it only through zeal for their rights, he would marry Ann Howlett as soon as she came out of prison——

"If she will have you," cried somebody; and the crowd laughed.

Clack repeated his declaration without noticing

the doubt, and moreover declared his willingness to travel into every county in England, Scotland, and Ireland, in behalf of the Union. He boasted of his connexions in all places, and pointed out the wisdom there would be in employing him as a missionary of the Union, in preparation for any future struggle.—This proposal went a degree too far in impudence, or Clack might, perhaps, have gained his object; for he seemed to have recovered his hold on the people in proportion as that of better men had been weakened. A plain statement from the Committee that, as they were in debt, they had no power at present to appoint a missionary, served, however, to disappoint Clack's hopes. He skilfully laid hold of the words "at present," and left it an understood matter between himself and the people that the office was to be his by and by.

Within half an hour, not a trace of the meeting was left but the trampled grass and the empty waggon. The people seemed to try who could flee the fastest, some to obtain the first access to the masters, some to get out of sight of a scene which had become disagreeable, and some few to talk big at the Spread-Eagle of what might have happened if this cowardly Committee would but have stood out a little longer.

Allen's steps were directed to Mr. Wentworth's counting-house. "I will ask work of him and of him only, in this line," thought he. "If I fail, I must take to some other occupation. They can hardly be all shut against an honest man."

"I am sorry for you, Allen," was Mr. Wentworth's reply when, with some difficulty, Allen had made his way through a crowd of people on the same errand with himself. "But you shall pronounce upon the case yourself. I can employ now only two-thirds of the number who turned out from me. Of these, at least half left me unwillingly, and have therefore the first title to employment; and the rest have worked for my firm for many years. At the best, I must refuse many whose services I should be glad to keep; judge then whether I can take on a stranger, be he who he may."

Allen bowed and had no more to say.

"If the firm you worked under cannot take you on, I fear you have little chance, Allen; for all are circumstanced like myself, I believe."

Allen shook his head, and would trespass no longer on Mr. Wentworth's time.

In the street he met Bray, who was looking for him to say farewell, while Hannah was doing the same to little Martha. Where were they going, and why so soon?

There was nothing to stay for now, Bray thought; for he had no liking to see honest men stand idle in the labour-market, except by their own choice. Choice made the entire difference in the case. As for where he was going,—he and Hannah must find out where people were most fond of street music and dancing, and would pay the best for it. And this put him in mind of what he had to say. He was as much obliged as Hannah herself, and more, by the

hospitality with which she had been received at Allen's house; but his friend could not suppose he meant his daughter to be any charge upon the family in times like these. On this account, and for old friendship's sake, and from the sympathy which one proscribed man should feel for another, he hoped Allen would do him the favour to pocket this little bit of paper and say no more about it.—Allen agreed so far as to defer saying much about it till better times should come. He only just told Bray that the bank note was most acceptable at present for a very particular purpose, wrung his friend's hand, and ran home to fetch his wife, that the suit of clothes might be rebought without loss of time. They proved a dear bargain; but that was a secondary consideration, poor as Allen was. He went to rest that night, satisfied that his honour was redeemed, and that his wife would scarcely venture to put it in pawn again.

His wife said to herself that she had no idea he could have been so stern as he was all this day; she scarcely knew him for William Allen. —Many people made the same observation from this time forward. His sternness only appeared when matters of honour were in question, and no one who knew by what means he had been made jealous on this point wondered at the tone of decision in which a once weak and timid man could speak. But there were other circumstances which made them scarcely able to believe him the same William Allen. He no longer touched his hat to the masters, or appeared to

see them as they passed. He no longer repaired to the Spread-Eagle to hear or tell the news, or to take part in consultation on the affairs of the workmen of Manchester, though he was ever ready to give his advice with freedom and mildness when called upon. He stated that he was a friend to their interests, and therefore anxious to avoid injuring them by being one of the body. He would not even represent his children, who grew up one after another to be employed in the factories, while their father toiled in the streets with his water-cart in summer and his broom in winter; enduring to be pointed out to strangers as the leader of an unsuccessful strike, as long as his family were not included with himself in the sentence of proscription.

When will it be understood by all that it rests with all to bring about a time when opposition of interests shall cease? When will masters and men work cheerfully together for their common good, respect instead of proscribing each other, and be equally proud to have such men as Wentworth and William Allen of their fellowship?

Summary of Principles illustrated in this Volume.

COMMODITIES, being produced by capital and labour, are the joint property of the capitalist and labourer.

The capitalist pays in advance to the labourers their share of the commodity, and thus becomes its sole owner.

The portion thus paid is WAGES.

REAL WAGES are the articles of use and consumption that the labourer receives in return for his labour.

NOMINAL WAGES are the portion he receives of these things reckoned in money.

The fund from which wages are paid in any country consists of the articles required for the use and consumption of labourers which that country contains

THE PROPORTION OF THIS FUND RECEIVED BY INDIVIDUALS MUST MAINLY DEPEND ON THE NUMBER AMONG WHOM THE FUND IS DIVIDED

The rate of wages in any country depends, therefore, not on the wealth which that country contains, but on the proportion between its capital and its population.

As population has a tendency to increase

faster than capital, wages can be prevented from falling to the lowest point only by adjusting the proportion of population to capital.

The lowest point to which wages can be permanently reduced is that which affords a bare subsistence to the labourer.

The highest point to which wages can be permanently raised is that which leaves to the capitalist just profit enough to make it worth his while to invest his capital.

The variations of the rate of wages between these extreme points depending mainly on the supply of labour offered to the capitalist, the rate of wages is mainly determined by the sellers, not the buyers of labour.

Combinations of labourers against capitalists (whatever other effects they may have) cannot secure a permanent rise of wages unless the supply of labour falls short of the demand;—in which case, strikes are usually unnecessary.

Nothing can permanently affect the rate of wages which does not affect the proportion of population to capital.

Legislative interference does not affect this proportion, and is therefore useless.

Strikes affect it only by wasting capital, and are therefore worse than useless.

Combinations may avail or not, according to the reasonableness of their objects.

Whether reasonable or not, combinations are

not subjects for legislative interference; the law having no cognizance of their causes.

Disturbance of the peace being otherwise provided against, combinations are wisely therefore now left unregarded by the law.

The condition of labourers may be best improved,—

1st. By inventions and discoveries which create capital.

2d. By husbanding instead of wasting capital: —for instance by making savings instead of supporting strikes.

3d. By ADJUSTING THE PROPORTION OF POPULATION TO CAPITAL.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES, STAMFORD-STREET.

COUSIN MARSHALL.

Chapter I.

A VERY HOT MORNING.

The gray light of a summer's morning was dawning on the cathedral towers of the city of ———, when Mr. Burke, a surgeon, returned on horseback from the country, where he had been detained by a patient till past midnight. It was Sunday morning, and he was therefore less surprised than grieved to see what kind of people they were who still loitered in the streets, and occasionally disturbed the repose of those who slept after their weekly toils. Here and there lay on a door-step, or in the kennel, a working man, who had spent his week's wages at the alehouse, and on being turned out when the clock struck twelve, had sunk down in a drunken sleep. Farther on were more of the same class, reeling in the middle of the street, or holding by the walls of the houses, with just sense enough to make their way gradually homewards, where their wives were either watching anxiously, or disturbed with miserable dreams on their account. The sound of the horse's hoofs on the pavement

roused the watchmen, of whom one rubbed his eyes, and came out of his box to learn the hour from the church clock, while another began to make a clearance of the tipplers, bidding them move on with threats which were lost upon their drowsy ears. One of these guardians of the night, however, was too far gone in slumber to be roused like the rest. Perhaps his own snoring prevented his hearing that any one passed by. Mr. Burke tickled this man's ear with his riding whip, and asked him the meaning of certain clouds of dun smoke which were curling up, apparently at some little distance, between the gazers and the pale eastern sky. The watchman's wit served him just so far as to suggest that there ought to be no smoke in that direction at this hour of a Sunday morning, and that he supposed smoke must come from fire. Upon this hint, Mr. Burke rode off at full trot, through such byways as would lead him most directly to the spot. Before he got there, however, his fears were confirmed by the various methods in which information of a fire is given. Rattles were sprung in quick succession, shouts and whoops were echoed from street to street, a red blaze was reflected from every chimney, and glittered like the setting sun on the windows of the upper stories, and the clangor of bells followed in less time than could have been supposed possible. Window after window was thrown up, as Mr. Burke passed, and night-capped heads popped out with the incessant inquiry—"Fire! Where?"

This was what Mr. Burke was as anxious as any one to know, and he therefore increased his speed till he arrived on the spot, and found that it was not a dwelling-house, but a large grocery warehouse, that was in flames. Having satisfied himself that no lives were in danger, and that every one was on the alert, he hastened homewards to deposit his horse, and quiet his sister's alarms, and returned to give assistance.

When he came back, two or three engines were on the spot, but unable to work from a deficiency of water. The river was not far distant; but so many impediments arose from the disposition of some of the crowd to speculate idly on the causes of the fire, and of others to bustle about without doing any good, that the flames were gaining ground frightfully. As more gentlemen arrived, however, they assisted Mr. Burke in his exertions to form two lines down to the river side, by one of which the full, and by the other the empty buckets might be passed with regularity and speed. Meanwhile, the crowd felt themselves at liberty to crack their jokes, as nothing but property was yet at stake.

A child clapped its hands in glee, as a pale blue flame shot up where there had been no light before.

"That's rum," said a man. "If there be raisins beside it, 'tis a pity we are not near enough to play snap-dragon."

"There will be a fine treat for the little ones when all is cool again," observed another. "A fine store of lollipops under the ruins. Look

how the hogsheads of sugar light one after another, like so many torches!"

"They say tea is best made of river water," said a third; "and it can't but boil in such a fire; so suppose you fetch your tea-service, neighbour."

"Rather tea than beer," replied another. "Did you taste the beer from the brewery fire? Pah! 'twas like what sea-water will be when the world is burnt."

"I missed my share then," answered the neighbour; "but I got two or three gallons of what was let out because the white-washer's boy was drowned in it. That was none the worse, that I could find out. My wife was squeamish about it, so I had it all to myself. Heydav! what's this about? Why, they won't let a man look on in peace!"

The constables were now vigorously clearing a space for the firemen, as there was some apprehension that the flames were spreading backwards, where there were courts and alleys crowded with dwellings of the poor. The fear was soon perceived to be too well founded. From an arched passage close by the burning building there presently issued a half-dressed woman with two children clinging to her, a third girl shivering and crying just behind, and a boy following with his arms full of clothes and bedding. Mr. Burke was with them instantly.

"Have the houses behind caught fire?"

"Ours has, sir; and it can't be saved, for there is no way to it but this. Not a thing could

we get out but what we have on; but, thank God, we are all safe!"

"O, mammy, mammy!" cried the elder girl, "she has not been out of bed this week, sir. She'll die with cold."

Mr. Burke had observed the ghastly look of the woman. He now bade her compose herself, and promised that the children should be taken care of, if she would tell him where she wished to go. She answered doubtfully that her sister lived in the next street.

"O, not there, mother!" said the boy. "Let us go to John Marshall's."

"'Tis too far, Ned. My sister will surely take us in at such a time as this. Lord have mercy! The flames dizzy one so!"

And the poor woman fell against the wall. Mr. Burke raised her, and bidding Ned go before to show the way, he half led and half carried her the short distance to her sister's house, the little ones running barefooted, holding by the skirts of his coat. On their way, they met a man whom the children proclaimed with one voice to be John Marshall.

"I was coming to you," said he, supporting the widow Bridgeman on the other side. "This is a sad plight I see you in, cousin; but cheer up! If you can get as far as our place, my wife bids me say you will be kindly welcome."

Mr. Burke thought the nearest resting-place was the best; and Marshall yielded, hoping the sister's door would be open, as it ought. It was but half open, and in that half stood the sister,

Mrs. Bell, arguing with Ned that the place was too small for her own family, and that his mother would be more comfortable elsewhere, and so forth. Mr. Burke cut short the argument by pushing a way, and depositing his charge upon the bed within. He then gave his name to the amazed Mrs. Bell, desired her to lend the children some clothing, and to keep her sister quiet till he should come again, sent Marshall for his wife, who would apparently nurse the widow Bridgeman better than her own sister, and then returned with Ned to see if any of the widow's little furniture could be saved. Before they reached the spot, however, the tenement was burnt to the ground, and the two or three next to it were pulled down to stop the fire, so that nothing more was to be done.

The widow seemed at first so much revived by the treatment which Mr. Burke ordered, and her cousin Marshall administered, that there was room for hope that the shock would leave her little worse than it found her; and the benevolent surgeon went home at six o'clock to refresh himself, bearing tidings to his sister, not only that the fire was extinguished, but that it appeared to have done no irreparable mischief beyond the destruction of property. He was not fully aware, however, in how weak a state his patient had previously been.

"Mammy!" said little Ann Bridgeman, who sat on a low stool, with a blue apron of her aunt's over her shoulders, her only covering except her shift, "Mammy, there goes the church bell."

"Hush!" said Jane, the eldest, who was more considerate.

"Mammy is awake," persisted Ann, looking again into the curtainless bed to see that the widow's eyes were open. "Do you hear the bell, mammy? And we cannot go to church."

"'Tis a strange Sunday, indeed, my child," replied the mother. "When I prayed last night, after all our work was done, that this might be a day of rest, I little thought what would happen."

Her cousin, Mrs. Marshall, came to her and begged that she would try to rest, and not to trouble herself with uneasy thoughts.

"My mind is so tossed about!" replied the poor woman. "It distracts me to think what we are to do next. And there sit the poor children without so much as a petticoat to wear; and the room is all as if the fire was roaring about me; and a letter from my husband, the only one I ever had, that I thought to have carried to my grave with me, is burned; and I might as well have saved it, if I had had a minute's thought; and——"

The sick woman burst into a hysterical cry which shook her frame so, that her cousin began to think how she could calm her. She ventured on a bold experiment when she found that her patient's talk still ran upon the letter, and that the consolations of Mrs. Bell, who now came to the bedside, only made the matter worse.

"Well now, I wonder," said Mrs. Bell, "that you should trouble yourself so about a letter, when you will be sure to remember what is in it. One

would think it was a bank note by the way you cry after it."

"A bank note!" cried the poor woman. "I would have set light to my house with a handful of bank notes, if I had had them, sooner than lose that letter; and yet nobody would think so by the way I left it behind me. There it was in the box with my rent, and with my mother's gold thimble, nigh at hand as I got out of bed, and I might just as well have saved it. O Lord! what a wretch I am!" she cried. "Take the children away! Don't let them come near me any more. Lord forgive me! Lord have mercy upon me!" and she raved fearfully.

"She's out of her senses," said Mrs. Bell, "and all for that trumpery letter. I'll make her believe we have found it."

"And so make her worse than ever when she discovers the trick," said Mrs. Marshall. "No, that won't do." And she turned to the sick woman,—"I say, Mary, you would not mind so much about the letter if you were to see your husband very soon, would you?"

"Surely no," replied the widow, looking perplexed, but immediately calm. "But my husband is gone, long ago, is not he? But perhaps I am going too. Is that what you mean, cousin Marshall?"

"I don't know whether you be or no, Mary; but you have no strength for raving as you did just now. If you wish to live for your children's sake, you must be quiet."

"I was thinking a deal about dying last

night, and what was to become of the children; but I forgot all about it to-day. Poor things! they have no friends but you two," looking from Mrs. Bell to her cousin Marshall. "You will see to them, I am sure. You will not cast them out upon the world; and depend upon it, it will be repaid to you. I will pray God day and night, just as I would here, to watch over them and reward those that are kind to them; particularly whichever of you takes Sally; for I am much afraid Sally will go blind." As she gazed earnestly in the faces of her relations, Mrs. Bell tried to put her off with bidding her make her mind easy, and trust in Providence, and hope to live. Her cousin Marshall did better.

"I will take charge of Sally and of one of the others," said she. "I promise it to you; and you may trust my promise, because my husband and I have planned it many a time when we saw what a weakly way you were in. They shall be brought up like our own children, and you know how that is."

"God bless you for ever, cousin! And as for the other two——"

"Leave that to me," replied Mrs. Marshall, who saw that the patient's countenance began to resume its unsettled expression. "Leave it all to me, and trust to my promise."

"Just one thing more," said the widow, starting up as her cousin would have retired. "Dear me! how confused my head is,—and all because you have moved the bed opposite the window, which my head never could bear. Listen

now. In the cupboard on the left side the bed, —at least, that is where it was,—you will find a japanned box that I keep my rent in. At the bottom of that box there is a letter——"

"Well, well, Mary. That will do by-and-by."

"Let me finish, cousin. Give that letter to Ned, and bid him keep it, because——"

"Aye, I understand. Because it is his father's writing, and the only one you ever had."

"Why, you know all about it!" exclaimed the widow, smiling, with a look of surprise. "I did not know I had ever told anybody. Well, now, I can't keep awake any longer; but be sure you wake me in time in the morning. I must be up to wash the children's things, for they want them sadly."

She dropped asleep instantly when her cousin had hung a shawl at the foot of the bed to hide the strange window. Ned had gone some minutes before for Mr. Burke, who pronounced, on seeing her, that she would probably never wake again. This proved true; and before night she was no more.

The fire created a great sensation in the city. The local newspapers described it as the most awful that had occurred in the place within the memory of man; and the London prints copied from them. Strangers came in from the country to visit the smoking ruins, and the firm to whom the warehouses belonged were almost overwhelmed with sympathy and offers of assistance. Mrs. Bell was disposed to make a profit out of all this. She would have stationed Ned, in a

tattered shirt, on the ruins of his mother's dwelling to beg, and have herself carried about a petition in behalf of the orphan children. The funeral, at least, ought, she thought, to be paid for by charity; but there was no moving the Marshalls on any of these points. They were so sure that the widow would have died, at all events, in a very short time, that they could not see why the fire should throw the expense of her funeral on the public; and even Mrs. Bell could not pretend that anything of much value had been lost in the fire except the rent, which would never be called for. The Marshalls countenanced Ned's dislike to go near the idle boys who were practising leaping on the ruins, and found it a far more natural and pleasant thing to dress the little Bridgemans in some of their own children's clothes and take them home, than to appeal to strangers on their behalf.

"You may do as you please, neighbour," cried Mrs. Bell, after an argument upon this subject. "If you choose to burden yourselves with two children in addition to your own five, it is no concern of mine; only don't expect me to put any such dead-weight upon my husband's neck."

"Your husband earns better wages than mine, Mrs. Bell."

"And that is what makes me wonder at your folly in not sending the children to the workhouse at once. No need to tell me what a little way a man's wages go in families like yours and mine."

"You have a good deal of help in other ways

to make out with, indeed, neighbour," observed Mrs. Marshall. "You have found the gentry very kind to you this year; so much so that I think the least you can do is to keep these children from being a burden on the rates, for the little time till they can shift for themselves.—I believe you bought neither coals nor blankets last winter."

"Bless your heart, cousin, the coals we got did not last half the winter through; for my husband likes a good fire when he can get it, and always expected to find one in the grate when he came home from the Leopard, however late at night it might be; and I had to sell one of the blankets presently. The other, on the bed there, is the only one we have till winter, when I hope to get a new one, if the ladies are not too particular about my having had two already. But, really, it tries one's patience to wait upon them ladies. Do you know I am disappointed again about the bag of linen against my confinement. I may be down any day now, and every bag is engaged, so that they can't promise with any certainty. So I must just take my chance for getting through somehow."

"And how is your baby provided?"

"O, they gave me a few trifles for it, which will do till I get about again, and can carry it to show how poorly it is off."

"Well," said Mrs. Marshall, "I do wonder you can bear to live from hand to mouth in that way. You got your first set of baby-linen at the same time that I did, and with your own money;

and why yours should not have lasted as well as mine, I can't think. Mine are not all worn out yet, and I always managed to replace, by timely saving, those that were. However, if you can't clothe your own children, I don't wonder so much that you will not feed your sister's. Poor things! must they go to the workhouse?"

"Unless you choose to take them all, cousin. So wonderful a manager as you are, perhaps you might contrive it."

Mrs. Marshall shook her head mournfully. She had not lodging room for more than two girls among her own, and could not have engaged that her husband's rent should be ready if more than two in addition were to share their daily meals. As it was, they must give up one dish of meat a week, and make some other reductions of the same kind.

"Better ask the gentry to help you, at once," said Mrs. Bell; "but I suppose you are too proud?"

"We will try what our own charity can do before we ask it from those who have less concern in the matter," said Mrs. Marshall. "There is one thing I mean to ask, however, because I cannot anyhow get it for them myself; and that is, to have them taught like my own children. Poor Sally must learn to knit while she has some eyesight left."

"Which of the others do you mean to take?" enquired Mrs. Bell, as if quite unconcerned in the matter.

Mrs. Marshall called in the four children from

the next room to consult them, to her cousin's utter amazement. She told them the plain truth, —that she had promised their mother to take charge of two of them, and that one of the two should be Sally; that the other two must live in the workhouse till they could earn their own subsistence; and that she wished them to agree with her which had best remain with her and Sally. Ned looked at his aunt with tears in his eyes; to which she answered by promising to see him sometimes, and to bring him some gingerbread when she had a penny to spare. Ned, who was too old to be spoken to in this way, brushed his sleeve across his eye, and observed to cousin Marshall that Jane had better go with him to the workhouse, because she was the oldest and would be soonest out of it, and because Sally liked to have little Ann to do things for her that she could not see to do herself. Cousin Marshall was quite of this opinion; and so the matter was settled.

A long private conversation followed after Mrs. Bell had left the room; if conversation it might be called which consisted of sobs and tears on the part of the children, and exhortations and pity on that of their friend.

"Remember, Ned," said she, "the one thing you must be always thinking about after you go into the workhouse is how soon you can get out again. It is God's will that has taken your mother from you, and that has made your relations poor, and so we must try and not think your lot a disgrace; but it will be a disgrace if

you stay long. Keep this up in Jane's mind too, for I am afraid of her forgetting it, as she is rather giddy.—I am not sorry, Jane, to see you cry so much, because I hope it will make you remember this strange day. I have heard of workhouse frolics, my dear. Never let me hear of them from you. You will have a service, I hope, in a few years, and you must try to make yourself fit to live with a different sort of people from those you will find in the workhouse."

Mrs. Bell, who had come back in time to hear the last few words, began to tell all she had heard about the pleasant kind of life people might lead in a workhouse if they chose; but her cousin cut her short by bidding the children take leave at once.

Few events wrung tears from this stout-hearted woman; but she kept her apron to her eyes the whole way home, and could not speak to any body all day.

Chapter II.

AN INTERIOR.

Miss Burke had gone into the country the morning after the fire, and remained some weeks. When she returned, she inquired of her brother what had become of the family who had been

burnt out. She was an occasional visitor at the workhouse school, and besides knew some of the elderly paupers, and went to see them now and then. Her visits were made as disagreeable as possible by the matron, who hated spies, as she declared, and had good reasons for doing so; many practices going forward under her management which would not bear inspection. She was sometimes politic enough to keep out of sight, when she was aware that something wrong had already met the lady's eye; but she more frequently confronted her near the entrance with such incivility as might, she hoped, drive her away without having seen anything. The master was an indolent, easy man, much afraid of the more disorderly paupers, and yet more of his wife. He seldom appeared to strangers till called for; but was then quite disposed to make the best of everything, and to agree in all opinions that were offered. There was little more use, though less inconvenience, in pointing out abuses and suggesting remedies to him than to his wife; yet Mr. Burke and his sister conscientiously persevered in doing this,—the gentleman from the lights he obtained in his office of surgeon to the workhouse infirmary, and the lady, from her brother's reports and her own observations.

Miss Burke's first inquiry at the workhouse gate was for nurse Rudrum. The porter's office consisted merely in opening the gate; so that when the lady had entered the court, she had to make further search. The court was half-full of

people, yet two women were washing dirty linen at the pump in the midst. Several men were seated cutting pegs for the tilers and shoemakers, and others patching shoes for their fellow-paupers; while several women stood round with their knitting, laughing loud; and some of the younger ones venturing upon a few practical jokes more coarse than amusing. At a little distance, sat two young women shelling peas for a grand corporation dinner that was to take place the next day, and beside them stood a little girl whose business was apparently to clean a spit on which she was leaning, but who was fully occupied in listening to the conversation which went on over the pea-basket. This group looking the least formidable, Miss Burke approached to make her inquiry. Being unperceived, the conversation was carried on in the same loud tone till she came quite near, when one of the young women exclaimed,

"I don't want to hear any more about it. I wonder you had the heart to do it."

"To do what?" asked Miss Burke. "Something that you do not look ashamed of," she continued, turning to the first speaker.

"Lord, no," said the girl with a bold stare. "It is only that a young mistress of mine, that died and left a child a week old, bade me see that it was taken care of till her husband came back, who was gone abroad; and I could not be troubled with the little thing, so I took it direct to the Foundling Hospital; and I heard that the father came home soon after, and the people at

the hospital could not the least tell which was his child, or whether it was one that had died. I kept out of the way, for I could not have helped them, and should only have got abused; for they say the young man was like one gone mad."

"And was it out of your own head that you took the child there, or who mentioned the hospital to you?"

"I knew enough about it myself," said the woman with a meaning laugh, "to manage the thing without asking any body. It is a fine place, that Foundling Hospital, as I have good reason to say."

"Pray find the matron," said Miss Burke to the little spit-cleaner, who was listening with open mouth; "and ask whether Miss Burke can be admitted to see nurse Rudrum. I think," she continued, when the little girl was out of hearing, "you might choose your conversation better in children's company."

"And in other people's company too," said the other sheller of peas. "I've not been used to such a place as this, and I can't bear it."

"You'll soon get used to it, Susan, my love," replied the bold one.

"Where do you come from, Susan, and why are you here?" inquired Miss Burke.

With many blushes, Susan told that she was a servant out of place, without friends and with no one to give her a character, her last master and mistress having gone off in debt and left her to be suspected of knowing of their frauds, though she had been so ignorant of them as not to have

attempted to secure her own wages. It was a hard case, and she did not know how to help herself; but she would submit to any drudgery to get out of the workhouse.

"And who are you?" said the lady to the other. "Are you a servant out of place too?"

"Yes."

"And without a character?"

"O yes, quite," said the woman with a laugh. "It is well for me that there are some places where characters don't signify so much as the parson tells us. Susan and I are on the same footing here."

Susan rose in an agony, and by mistake emptied the shelled peas in her lap among the husks.

"There! never mind picking them out again," said the other. "If I take such a trouble, it shall be for my own supper, when the rest are done."

"So you really think," said Miss Burke, "that you and Susan are on the same footing because you live under the same roof and sit on the same seat? I hope Susan will soon find that you are mistaken."

At this moment appeared Mrs. Wilkes the matron, shouting so that all the yard might hear.

"Is it nurse Rudrum you want? She is out of her mind and not in a state for prayer. Gentlefolks are enough to send poor people out of their minds with praying and preaching."

"I am not going either to pray or preach," replied Miss Burke; "and you well know that it is some years since nurse Rudrum was in her right mind. I only ask the way to her."

"Yonder lies your way, madam. Only take care of the other mad people, that's all."

Surprised and vexed to perceive Miss Burke persevering in her purpose, notwithstanding this terrifying warning, she continued,

"Remember, if you please, that the doctors don't allow their patients to be made methodists of; though God knows how many are sent here by the methodists. You'll please to take it all upon yourself, ma'am."

Miss Burke, not seeing how all this concerned herself and nurse Rudrum, who were about equally far from methodism, pursued her way, as well as she could guess, to the right ward.—She could not easily miss it when once within hearing of nurse Rudrum's never-ceasing voice, or the tip tap of her ancient high-heeled shoes, which she was indulged in wearing, as it was a fancy not likely to spread. Nurse was employed as usual, pacing to and fro in the ward appropriated to the harmless insane, knitting as fast as her well-practised fingers would go, and talking about Jupiter.

"Miss Burke, I declare," cried she, as soon as her visitor appeared. "You are welcome, as you always are—always very welcome; but," and she came nearer and looked very mysterious, "you are come from them people at a distance,

I doubt. Now don't deny it if you be. If they have practised upon me, you didn't know it; so no need to deny it, you know."

"I am come from Mr. Earle's nurse; and Mr. Earle sent his love to you, and hopes you will accept some tea and sugar; and the young ladies will come and see you when they visit me, and in the meanwhile they have sent you a Sunday shawl."

A dozen curtseys, and "My duty to them, my duty and many thanks; and I dare say it is because they are so sorry about them people at a distance that practise upon my uncle, without so much as shaking their heads."

"O, your uncle! I was to ask particularly how your uncle is. You seem able to walk pretty briskly."

"That's to disappoint 'em, you see," and she laughed knowingly. "I only tell *you*, you know, so you'll be quiet. They can't touch me anywhere else, because of Jupiter in my cradle."

"What was that, nurse?"

"O that was when they made me a watch-planet; and a fine thing it was to keep me from harm,—all except my uncle, you see. It was Jupiter, you know; and I feel it all over me now sometimes,—most in my elbows. It was only Jupiter; none of the rest of them. That was my mother's *doing*; for Jupiter is the most religious of all the planets."

And so she ran on till her visiter interrupted her with questions about some of her companions in the ward.

"Ay—a queer set for me to be amongst, a'n't they? That poor man! Look at his sash;" and she giggled while she showed how a poor idiot was fastened by a leathern belt to a ring in the wall. "He spins a good deal as it is; but if he could walk about, he would do nothing. He has no more sense than a child, and people of that sort are always for tramp, tramp, tramping from morning till night, till it wearies one's ears to hear them.'

And nurse resumed her walk. When she returned to the same place, she went on,—

"If these people could be made to hold their tongues, they would be better company; but you never heard such a clatter; they won't hear one speak. That girl sings to her spinning-wheel the whole day long, and she has but one tune. They say I am growing deaf; but I'm sure I hear that song for ever, as much when she is not singing as when she is. But do you think that I am growing deaf, really now?"

Miss Burke could only say that when people got to nurse's age, and so on.

"Well now, 'tis only because of Jupiter,—listening as a watch-planet should, you know. You should have heard his music last night;—that that I used to sing to the little Earles, when master Charles was afraid to go to bed alone because of the ghost-story I told him; and I put him to bed in Miss Emma's room for once, and nobody knew: so don't tell my mistress, for she never forgave such a thing."

Miss Burke smiled and sighed; for this master

Charles was now a man of forty, and Mrs. Earle had been in her grave nearly twenty years. As the visiter was about to take leave, nurse laid her hand on the lady's arm, drew up her tight little person to its best advantage, and gravely said,

"One thing more, Miss Burke. You will give me leave to ask why I am detained in this place, among idiots and dolts that are no companions for me? This is a poor reward for my long service, and so you may tell Mr. Earle."

"We hoped you had everything comfortable, nurse. You always seem in good spirits."

"Comfortable! You mean as to tea and sugar and shawls; but what is that compared with the company I keep? The Earles don't know what they miss by what they do. Many a time I would go and see them, and carry them a piece of gingerbread, if I was not prevented."

"Well, nurse, you shall come and see them at our house by and by. In the meanwhile,—you know the boys in the yard are very rude, and they are too apt to teaze old people. We think you are more comfortable out of their way."

Nurse still looked haughty and dissatisfied.

"Besides," continued Miss Burke, "watch-planets are not common, you know; and who knows how they might be treated in the world?"

"True, true, true," cried the delighted old woman. "There are but two in the world besides me, and they are at Canterbury, where my mother lived nurse twenty years. 'Tis one

them that study the stars that bow before watch-planets. Well! we shall all study the stars up above, and then will be the time for us watch-planets."

So saying, nurse Rudrum returned to the track she had worn in the floor, and Miss Burke heard the well known pit pat all the way down stairs.

The lady now turned into the school, where she was equally welcome to mistress and scholars, especially after an absence of some duration, as now. The mistress, Mrs. Mott, was not exactly the person the ladies would have appointed to the office, if the choice had been left to them; but, all things considered, the appointment might have been worse filled. Mrs. Mott, a starched, grim-looking personage, had kept a dame school in a village for many years, during which time she had acquired a very high opinion of herself and her modes of tuition;—an opinion which she continued to instil into the guardians of the poor, by whom she was appointed to her present office; their choice being also aided by the consideration that Mrs. Mott must have parish assistance at all events, and might as well do something in exchange for it. The ladies who interested themselves about the children, seeing that the choice lay between having no school at all and having Mrs. Mott for a schoolmistress, made the best of the latter alternative.

When the lady entered, Mrs. Mott was doing what she rather prided herself upon,—carrying on two affairs at once. She was fixing work for the girls,—plying her needle as fast as possible

—and leading a hymn which the children sang after her, kneeling on their benches, with their hands clasped before them, and every little body rocking from side to side to mark the time. When it was over, and the children scrambled down into their seats, a universal grin of pleasure greeted Miss Burke from her old acquaintance, and a stare of wonder from the new comers who yet knew her only by reputation. Mrs. Mott, meanwhile, went on drawing out her thread most indefatigably, and murmuring as if under some emotion.

"Good morning, Mrs. Mott. It is some time since I saw you last."

"Time, madam! Ay: time is given, time is given where all else is given. 'Tis ours to seize it ere it flies."

"How are your family, Mrs. Mott? I hope your sons are doing better."

"Son, madam, son! I suppose you don't know that the Lord has made choice of Jack?"

Miss Burke was much concerned; and tried to hear the story notwithstanding a hubbub at the bottom of the school, which at length roused the teacher's wrath.

"Tommy bit Jemmy," was the reply of twenty little voices to the inquiry of what was the matter.

"Tommy is a bad boy and must be punished," was the verdict; and the sentence speedily followed. "We are going to prayers, and I will have no disturbance while prayers are going on; but I will have justice. So, as soon as prayers

are over, Jemmy shall bite Tommy in whatever part he chooses."

Miss Burke considered how she might best interfere with the process without setting aside the mistress's authority. She waited till prayers were over, and then called the two boys before her. She represented to the sobbing culprit the enormity of biting human flesh, and then asked Jemmy if he had any urgent desire to bite Tommy.

"I don't want to bite him, unless I'm bid," was the reply.

"Very well; then, suppose you forgive him instead. This will make him very careful not to hurt you another time. Will it not, Tommy?"

Tommy agreed, and words instead of wounds were exchanged.

The next inquiry was for the Bridgemans. Ned was called out of the ranks of departing schoolboys, and Jane was sent for, being detained from school this day to help to prepare for the corporation dinner. On her appearance, she was recognized as the cleaner of spits, who had listened so eagerly to the praises of the Foundling Hospital. Miss Burke told them how she had heard of their circumstances, and her intention to visit them from time to time. She asked them if they were happy.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Jane, readily; "a deal happier than we thought."

Ned, however, only bit his lip to keep back his tears. Miss Burke framed her speech to suit both.

"You know," she said, "that we all consider

that you are here only for a time, and we trust a short time. It has pleased God to take from you your natural protectors and teachers; and children like you must be taken care of, and taught, before you can find a way in the world. But, if you choose, you may soon make yourselves fit for a better and a happier place than this; and the more cheerfully you set about it, Ned, the more quickly you will learn. You, Jane, should seek out the more sober and quiet young women to talk to, instead of listening to the foolish gossip that goes on in the yard. Has Susan been kind to you?"

"She always keeps by herself when she can, ma'am."

"She will be kind to you, however, I am sure, if you deserve it; and I believe she can teach you many things you will like to learn."

In order to unloose Ned's tongue, the lady made several inquiries about their comforts. They had nothing to complain of but that they did not like milk-broth, which composed their dinner twice a week, and that the workhouse dress was very hot and heavy. The first evil could not be helped—the other seemed very reasonable; and Miss Burke determined to urge an objection to it through her brother, as it appeared that a thick woollen dress was the most liable to dirt of any that could be fixed upon, and the most unseemly when worn into holes; besides this, the children were exposed to colds from the temptation to throw off the dress when heated, and from exchanging it for their own

old clothes on Sundays and holidays. Jane had, as her brother declared, been scarcely ever without colds since she entered the workhouse, as cousin Marshall had been kind enough to provide her with a complete suit on her entrance, which Jane was fond of wearing whenever she went to church, or to the gardens, or——"

"To the gardens! What gardens?"

The public tea-gardens, where the girls and boys were treated very often on Sundays, sometimes under guidance, and sometimes without any. Jane was very eloquent in describing these frolics, and others which took place within the walls.

Miss Burke had little hope of counteracting such influences as these by an occasional visit; but she now said what she thought most likely to impress the mind of the poor girl, and then proceeded to find Susan, in order to recommend Jane to her care. She was glad to see Wilkes, the master, unaccompanied by his wife, and conversing with a gentleman whom she knew to be one of the visitors. Before she reached them, she perceived that Ned was following her with a wistful look.

"Have you any thing more to say to me?" she inquired.

"Only, ma'am, that perhaps you may know when we may get out. I should like to see the time when we shall get out."

"I wish I could tell you, my dear boy; but I can only guess, like you. I guess it will be when Jane is fit for service, and you for labour in the fields or elsewhere."

"I can labour now," said the boy, brightening. "If they would try me, I am sure I could dig all day."

"Be patient, Ned; and then, if you turn out a clever workman when the right time comes, who knows but you may not only keep out of the workhouse yourself, but prevent somebody else from coming in?"

Ned smiled, pulled his forelock, and went away cheered.

Mr. Nugent, the visitor, met Miss Burke with an observation on the improvement of workhouses which rendered them accessible to female benevolence; whereas they were once places where no lady could set her foot. Miss Burke gravely replied that there was much yet for benevolence to do. The necessary evils of a workhouse were bad enough; and it was afflicting to see them needlessly aggravated,—to see poverty and indigence confounded, and blameless and culpable indigence, temporary distress, and permanent destitution, all mixed up together, and placed under the same treatment. These distinctions were somewhat too nice for the gentleman's perceptions; at least, while announced in abstract terms. He stood in an attitude of perplexed attention, while Willes asked whether she would have the paupers live in separate dwellings.

Miss Burke observed that the evil began out of the workhouse; and that the want of proper distinctions there made classification in the house an imperative duty.

"We are too apt," she said, "to regard all the poor alike, and to speak of them as one class, whether or not they are dependent; that is, whether they are indigent or only poor. There must always be poor in every society; that is, persons who can live by their industry, but have nothing beforehand. But that there should be able-bodied indigent, that is, capable persons who cannot support themselves, is a disgrace to every society, and ought to be so far regarded as such as to make us very careful how we confound the poor and the indigent."

"I assure you, ma'am," said Wilkes, "it grieves me very much to see honest working men, or sober servants out of place, come here to be mixed up with rogues and vagabonds."

"But they are all indigent alike," observed Mr. Nugent, "or your honest labourers would not have to come here."

"All indigent certainly, sir; but not all alike. We have had cottagers here for a time, after losing cows and pigs by accident; and even little farmers after a fire on their premises; and labourers, when many hundreds were turned off at once from the public works. Now, this sort of indigence is very different from that which springs out of vice."

"It seems to me," said Miss Burke, "that as wide a distinction ought to be made between temporary and lasting indigence, and between innocent and guilty indigence, within the workhouse, as between poverty and indigence out of it; and as the numbers are, I believe, very un-

equal, I should think it might easily be done. I suppose, Mr. Wilkes, those who require permanent support, the invalids and the thoroughly depraved, are few in comparison with those who come in and go out again after a time."

"Very few indeed, ma'am. Mr. Nugent knows that our numbers are for ever varying. One year we may have seven hundred in the house, and another year not so much as three hundred. It seems to me the surest way of making the industrious into vagabonds, and the sober into rogues, to mix them all up together; to say nothing of the corruption to the children."

"I heard the other day," said Mr. Nugent, "that few of the children who have been brought up here turn out well. But it can't be helped, madam. The plan of out-door pay must have its limits, and our building a new house for the moral or immoral, is out of the question in the present state of the funds. The rate has increased fearfully of late, as your brother will tell you. I confess I do not see what is to become of the system altogether, if we go on as we have been doing for the last five years."

Miss Burke observed that she was far from wishing to urge any new expenses. She rather believed that much money would be saved by enabling the industrious to pursue their employments undisturbed, and by keeping the young and well-disposed out of the contagion of bad example. She pointed out the case of Susan as one of great hardship, and that of little Jane as one of much danger. Wilkes confirmed the fact of Susan being a good girl, and a well-

qualified servant, and told that the other woman had been discharged from various services for theft and other crimes.

Mr. Nugent, who, in the midst of his talk about improvement, disliked trouble and innovation, related that an attempt at classification had once been made by building a wall across the yard, to separate the men and women; but that the wall had been pulled down in a riot of the paupers, after which it was considered too formidable an undertaking to rebuild it.

Miss Burke thought, on her way home, that classification must begin among the guardians of the poor, before much reformation could be looked for. The intrepid and active among the gentlemen, if separated from the fearful and indolent, might carry the day against the ill-conducted paupers; but such a result was scarcely to be hoped while the termagant Mrs. Wilkes monopolized all authority within the walls, and the majority of the guardians insisted on the let-alone plan of policy being pursued; a plan under which everything was let alone but the rates, which increased formidably from year to year.

Chapter III.

TEA AND TALK.

Mr. Burke came in earlier than usual this evening, the first time since his sister's return that he could enjoy her society in peace. When he ar-

rived wet and chilly from a stormy ride, and found a little fire, just enough for a rainy summer's evening, burning brightly in the grate, the tea apparatus prepared, his slippers set ready, his study gown awaiting him, and a pile of new medical books laid within reach, as if to offer him the choice of reading or conversation, he wished within himself that Louisa would leave home no more till he was married, if that time should ever come. This wish was pardonable; for he was, to use his own expression, so accustomed to be spoiled by his sister that he scarcely knew what comfort was while she was away.

"Any notes or messages for me, Louisa?" he inquired, before resigning himself to his domestic luxuries.

"Alas, yes!" she replied, handing him two or three from their appointed receptacle.

"These will all do to-morrow," he cried; "so make tea while I change my coat," a direction which was gladly obeyed. On his return he flung the books on a distant table, stretched himself out with feet on fender, coaxed his dog with one hand, and stirred his steaming cup with the other.

"I wish I were a clergyman," were his first words.

"To have parsonage comforts without getting wet through in earning them, I suppose," said Louisa, laughing.

"You are far from the mark, Louisa."

Louisa made many guesses, all wrong, about

capricious patients, provoking consulting physicians, unpaid bills, jealous competitors, and other causes of annoyance.

"No, no, dear. It is a deeper matter than any of these. The greatest question now moving in the world is, 'What is charity?'"

"Alas, yes! And who can answer it? Johnson gave a deficient answer, and Paley a wrong one; and who can wonder that multitudes make mistakes after them?"

"A clergyman, Louisa, a wise clergyman who discerns times and seasons, may set many right; and God knows how many need it! He will not follow up a text from Paul with a definition from Johnson and an exhortation from Paley. He will not suppose because charity once meant alms-giving, that it means it still; or that a kind-hearted man must be right in thinking kindness of heart all-sufficient, whether its manifestation be injurious or beneficial. He will not recommend keeping the heart soft by giving green gooseberries to a griped child,—as he might fairly do if he carried out Paley's principle to its extent."

"A professional illustration," replied Louisa. "You want me to carry it on unto the better charity of giving the child bitter medicine. But, brother, let the clergyman preach as wisely and benignantly as he may, why should you envy him? Cannot you, do not you, preach as eloquently by example?"

"That is the very thing," replied her brother.

"I am afraid my example preaches against my principles.—O, dear, if it was but as easy to know how to do right as to do it!"

"What can have wounded your conscience to-day?" replied Louisa. "You are generally as ready in applying principles as decided in acting upon them. What can have placed you in a new position since morning?"

"Nothing: but my eyes are more opened to that in which I already stood; and really, Louisa, it is a very questionable one. I will tell you.—I am a medical officer of various charities which would be good if benevolent intention and careful management could make them so, but of the tendency of which I think very ill. The question is, whether I am not doing more harm than good by officiating at the Dispensary and Lying-in Hospital, while it is clear to me that the absence of these charities would be an absence of evil to society?"

"You must remember, brother, that your secession would have no other effect than to put another medical officer in your place. I am afraid you are not yet of consequence enough," laughing, "to show that these institutions must stand or fall with you."

"That argument of yours, Louisa, has done long and good service to many a bad cause. I can allow it no more weight with me than with a discontented Catholic in good old Luther's days. No: my plea to my own doubts has hitherto been that my office gave me the opportunity of promoting my own views both among

the benefactors and the poor; but I begin to think I may do so much more effectually by resigning my office in those charities which I consider to be doing harm, openly stating my reasons, of course."

"Have you long meditated this, brother?"

"Yes, for several months; but a particular circumstance has roused my attention to-day. These anniversary times always disgust me,—these stated periods for lauding the benevolent and exhibiting the benefited. I am sure the annual dinner would be better attended by the subscribers to the Dispensary, for instance, if the custom of parading round the room as many of the patients as could be got hold of were discontinued. But it is the matter of fact of the Report, and the way in which it is viewed by the patrons, that has startled me to-day. I was referred to, as usual, by the secretary and one or two more for information respecting certain classes of patients, and I was shown the Report which is to be read after dinner to-morrow. You will scarcely guess what is the principal topic of congratulation in it."

"That Lord B—— takes the chair to-morrow, perhaps? Now, do not look angry, but let me guess again. That the subscriptions have increased?"

"Aim in an opposite direction, and you will hit it."

"That the funds are insufficient? Can this be it?"

"Just so. The number of patients has in-

creased so much, that a further appeal is made to the public in behalf of this admirable charity, which has this year relieved just double the number it relieved ten years ago."

"I thought," said Louisa, "that its primary recommendation, ten years ago, was that it was to lessen the amount of sickness among the poor."

"True," replied her brother; "and upon this understanding many subscribed who are now rejoicing over the numbers of the sick. If the plague were to visit us, they might see the matter in its right light. They would scarcely rejoice that five hundred more were brought to the pest-house daily."

"But how comes the increase?" inquired Louisa. "I understand it in the case of the Lying-in Charity, which seems to me the worst in existence, except perhaps foundling hospitals; but this is different——"

"From all other institutions, it is to be hoped," interrupted her brother. "It is dreadful to see the numbers of poor women disappointed of a reception at the last moment, and totally unprovided. The more are admitted, the more are thus disappointed; and those who are relieved quit the hospital in a miserable state of destitution."

"Probably, brother. What else could be expected under so direct a bounty on improvidence—under so high a premium on population? But how do you imagine the number of sick increases so fast? Are your Dispensary patients

in due proportion to the general increase of numbers in the place?"

"Alas, no! They are much more numerous. Not only do numbers increase very rapidly; but from their increasing beyond the means of comfortable subsistence, the people are subject to a multitude of diseases arising from hardship alone. It would make your heart ache if I were to tell you how large a proportion of my Dispensary patients are children born puny from the destitution of their parents, or weakly boys and girls, stunted by bad nursing, or women who want rest and warmth more than medicine, or men whom I can never cure until they are provided with better food."

"How you must wish sometimes that your surgery was stocked with coals and butcher's meat!"

"If it were, Louisa, the evil would only be increased, provided this sort of medicine were given gratis, like my drugs. There is harm enough done by the poor taking for granted that they are to be supplied with medicine and advice gratis all their lives: the evil is increasing every day by their looking on assistance in child-birth as their due; and if they learn to expect food and warmth in like manner, their misery will be complete."

"But what can we do, brother? Distress exists: no immediate remedy is in the hands of the poor themselves. What can be done?"

"These are difficulties, Louisa, which dog the heels of all bad institutions.—We must do this.

We must make the best of a vast amount of present misery, thankful that we see at length the error of having caused it. We must steadily refuse to increase it, and employ all the energies of thinking heads and benevolent hearts in preventing its recurrence, and shortening to the utmost its duration. Here is ample scope for all the tenderness of sensibility which moralists would encourage, and for all the wisdom which can alone convert that tenderness into true charity."

"What should be our first step, brother?"

"To ascertain clearly the problem which we are to solve. The grand question seems to me to be this—*How to reduce the number of the indigent?* which includes, of course, the question, How to prevent the poor becoming indigent?"

"If this had been the problem originally proposed, brother, there would have been little indigence now: but formerly people looked no farther than the immediate relief of distress, and thought the reality of the misery a sufficient warrant for alms-giving."

"And what is the consequence, Louisa? Just this: that the funds raised for the relief of pauperism in this country exceed threefold the total revenues of Sweden and Denmark. Ay; our charitable fund exceeds the whole revenue of Spain; and yet distress is more prevalent than ever, and goes on to increase every year. The failure of British benevolence, vast as it is in amount, has hitherto been complete; and all for want of right direction."

"Well, brother, how would you direct it? How would you set about *lessening the number of the indigent?*"

"I would aim at two objects: increasing the fund on which labourers subsist, and proportioning their numbers to this fund.—For the first of these purposes, not only should the usual means of increasing capital be actively plied, but the immense amount which is now unproductively consumed by the indigent should be applied to purposes of production. This cannot be done suddenly; but it should be done intrepidly, steadily, and at a gradually increasing rate. This would have the effect, at the same time, of fulfilling the other important object,—that of limiting the number of consumers to a due proportion to the fund on which they subsist."

"You would gradually abolish all charitable institutions then——O no! not all. There are some that neither lessen capital nor increase population. You would let such remain."

"There are some which I would extend as vigorously and perseveringly as possible; viz., all which have the enlightenment of the people for their object. Schools should be multiplied and improved without any other limit than the number and capabilities of the people."

"What! all schools? Schools where maintenance is given as well as education?"

"The maintenance part of the plan should be dropped, and the instruction remain."

"But, brother, if one great evil of gratuitous assistance is that the poor become dependent

upon a false support, does not this apply in the case of a gratuitous education?"

"The time will come, I trust, Louisa, when, the poorer classes will provide wholly for themselves and their families; but at present we must be content with making them provide what is essential to existence. To enable them to do this, they must be educated; and as education is not essential to existence, we may fairly offer it gratis till they have learned to consider it indispensable. Even now, I would have all those pay something for the education of their children who can; but let all be educated, whether they pay or not."

"The blind, and the deaf and dumb, I suppose, among others?"

"Yes; and in these cases I would allow of maintenance also, since the unproductive consumption of capital in these cases is so small as to be imperceptible, and such relief does not act as a premium upon population. A man will scarcely be in any degree induced to marry by the prospect of his blind or deaf children being taken off his hands, as the chances are ten thousand to one against any of his offspring being thus infirm. Such relief should be given till there are none to claim it."

"I heard the other day, brother, of a marriage taking place between a blind man and woman in the asylum at X——."

"Indeed! If anything could make me put these institutions on my proscribed list, it would be such a fact as that. The man could play the

organ, and the woman knit, and make sash-line, I suppose?"

"Just so; and they could each do several other things, but, of course, not those common offices which are essential to the rearing of a family. It struck me immediately as a crime against society. Well—what other charities should stand?"

"Whatever else I resign, Louisa, I shall retain my office at the Casualty Hospital. I hope this kind of relief will be dispensed with in a future age; but the people are not yet in a condition to provide against the fractures, wounds and bruises which befall them in following their occupations. This institution may rank with Blind Asylums."

"And what do you think of alms-houses for the aged?"

"That they are very bad things. Only consider the numbers of young people that marry under the expectation of getting their helpless parents maintained by the public! There are cases of peculiar hardship, through deprivation of natural protection, where the aged should be taken care of by the public. But the instances are very rare where old people have no relations; and it should be as universal a rule that working men should support their parents, as that they should support their children. If this rule were allowed, we might see some revival of that genial spirit of charity and social duty among the poor, whose extinction we are apt to mourn, without reflecting that we ourselves have

caused it by the injudicious direction of our own benevolence.—This reminds me of the Bridgemans. Mark how those poor children are disposed of. Two are taken care of by distant relations who have never in their lives accepted charity, except the schooling of their children. A nearer relation, who has, to my knowledge, uselessly consumed many a pound of the charitable fund, sends the other two to the workhouse."

"A case very appropriate to what you have been saying, brother. But how is poor Sally? Can nothing save her sight?"

"Nothing, I fear. I have already spoken of her case to several governors of the Blind Asylum, where I hope she may be received on the first vacancy. The Marshalls are too sensible, I am sure, not to see the advantage of getting her placed there; and it may be the means of releasing one of the others from the workhouse."

Louisa now related her morning's adventures. Her brother smiled as he warned her that she would, no doubt, be pronounced an eccentric young woman by Mr. Nugent, and declared that he thought her in the way to be admirably disciplined, between the railings of Mrs. Wilkes, the rude wonder of the paupers, and the more refined speculations of those who had different notions of charity from herself.

Louisa considered that an important constituent of charity was its capability of "bearing all things." She blushed while she described to her best friend the little trials she was exposed to in her attempts to do good. Abuse from

beggars she little regarded, as it was the portion of all who passed along the streets of this ill-regulated city without giving alms; much harder things to bear were the astonishment of her fellow-members of the school committee at her refusing to sanction large gifts of clothing to the children; the glances of the visitors of the soup and blanket charities, when she declined subscribing and yielding her services; and, above all, the observations of relatives whom she respected, and old friends whom she loved, on the hardness of heart and laxity of principle shown by those who thought and acted as she did.

"Laxity of principle!" exclaimed her brother. "That is a singular charge to bring in such a case;—as if less vigour of principle was required to reflect on the wisest, and to adopt unusual, methods of doing good than to let kindly emotions run in the ruts of ancient institutions! I should say that the vigour of principle is on your side."

"Better make no decision about it, brother. It is not the province of charity to meddle with motives, whatever its real province may be.—But about your medical offices;—it seems to me that you must resign them, thinking as you do."

"And then what a hard-hearted, brutal fellow I shall be thought," said her brother, smiling.

"No, no: only an oddity. But the speculations upon you may prove good for the cause of charity."

"It shall be done, Louisa; and that as soon as we have determined on the best manner. I

shall give up the Dispensary and the Lying-in Charity, and keep the Casualty Hospital. As for the Workhouse Infirmary——"

"Ay; I was wondering what you would say to that."

"I like it no better, but considerably worse, than many others; but it stands on a different footing, inasmuch as it is established by law; and it seems to me that I must follow other methods of abolition than that of withdrawing my services. There is no place of appeal for such an act, as there is in the case of a voluntary charity."

"There is little enough that is voluntary in this case, to be sure, brother. Such complaints about the rate from the payers! Such an assertion on the part of the poor of their right to a maintenance by the state! Whence arises this right?"

"I do not admit it," replied her brother. "Those who do admit it, differ respecting its origin. Some assert the right of every individual born into any community to a maintenance from the state; regarding the state and its members as holding the relation of parent and children. This seems to me altogether a fallacy;—originating in benevolent feelings, no doubt, but supported only by a false analogy. The state cannot control the number of its members, nor increase, at its will, the subsistence-fund; and, therefore, if it be engaged to support all the members that might be born to it, it would engage for more than it might have the power to per-

form.—Others, who admit this in the abstract, plead for the right of the indigent of Great Britain to a maintenance from the state, on the ground of the disabilities to which the poor are peculiarly liable in this country, from the aristocratic nature of some of our institutions, the oppressive amount of taxation, and its pressure upon the lower classes. I admit a claim to relief here; but the relief should not be given, even could it be effectual, in the shape of an arbitrary institution like that of our pauper system. The only appropriate relief is to be found in the removal of the grievances complained of; in the modification of certain of our institutions; in the lightening, and, yet more, in the equalization of taxation.—Mark what a state we have arrived at from our mistaken recognition of this *right* to support! Though the subsistence-fund has increased at a rapid rate within a hundred years, through the improvements introduced by art and civilization, the poor-rate has, in that time, increased from five or six hundred thousand pounds a-year to upwards of eight millions!"

"Some say," observed his sister, "that it is not the recognition of the right which has caused the mischief, but the imperfect fulfilment of the original law. You know better than I whether this is true."

"It is clear," replied her brother, "that neither the letter nor the spirit of the original law was adhered to; but it is also clear that, in that law, the state promised more than it could perform. Did you ever read the famous clause of

the famous 43d of Elizabeth? No? There lies Blackstone. I will show it you."

"But first tell me what state the poor were in when that act was passed."

"For the credit of Elizabeth's government, it is certainly necessary to premise what you inquire about.—From the year 597, that is, from Pope Gregory's time, tithes paid to the clergy were expressly directed to be divided into four parts, as Blackstone here tells us, you see; one part for the bishops, one for the clergyman, incumbent, or parson; one for repairing and keeping up the church; and one for the maintenance of the poor."

"But do the clergy pay a fourth part of their tithes to the poor?"

"O no," replied her brother, laughing. "That troublesome order was got rid of many hundred years ago; and so was the clause respecting the share of the bishops; so that tithes became, in a short time, a very pretty consideration. Well; though some notice of the poor was occasionally taken by the legislature, no complaints of their state made much noise till Henry VIII. suppressed the monasteries. These monasteries had supported crowds of idle poor, who were now turned loose upon the country; and with them a multitude of vagabond monks, who were a nuisance to the whole kingdom. It became necessary to stop the roaming, begging, and thieving, which went on to the dismay and injury of all honest people; and for this purpose, the famous act of Elizabeth was framed. This

statute enacts, 'That the churchwardens and overseers shall take order, from time to time, (with the consent of two or more justices,) for setting to work the children of all such whose parents shall not be thought able to keep and maintain their children; and also for setting to work all such persons, married or unmarried, having no means to maintain them, and using no ordinary or daily trade to get their living by; and also to raise, by taxation, &c., a convenient stock of flax, to set the poor on work; and also competent sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them, being poor and not able to work.' You see how this is aimed at vagabonds as well as designed for the impotent. Many a monkish bosom, no doubt, heaved a sigh at the mention of 'a convenient stock of flax.'"

"Surely, brother," said Louisa, "the state promises by this act just what you said no state could fairly promise, without having the control of its numbers; it promises to support all its indigent members."

"It does; and it promises another thing equally impossible of fulfilment. Here is an engagement to find employment for all who would not or could not procure it for themselves. Now, as the employment of labour must depend on the amount of the subsistence-fund, no law on earth can enforce the employment of more labour than that fund can support."

"Then this promise has not been fulfilled, I suppose?"

"Many attempts have been made to fulfil it, all of which have had the effect of diverting industry from its natural channel, and taking the occupation of the independent labourer out of his hands to put it into that of the pauper. This is so ruinous an operation, that the wonder is how the pauper system has failed to swallow up all our resources, and make us a nation of paupers."

"In which case," observed Louisa, "the state would be found to have engaged to maintain itself in a pauper condition, What a blunder! Twenty-four millions of paupers are bound by law to maintain twenty-four millions of paupers!"

"This is the condition we shall infallibly be brought to, Louisa, unless we take speedy means to stop ourselves. We are rolling down faster and faster towards the gulf, and two of our three estates, Lords and Commons, have declared that we shall soon be in it;—that in a few more years the profits of all kind of property will be absorbed by the increasing rates, and capital will therefore cease to be invested; land will be let out of cultivation, manufactures will be discontinued, commerce will cease, and the nation become a vast congregation of paupers."

"Dreadful! brother. How can we all go quietly about our daily business with such a prospect before us?"

"A large proportion of the nation knows little about the matter: some hope that fate, or Providence, or something will interfere to save us; others think that it is no business of theirs;

and those whose business it is are at a loss what to do."

"But how long has there been so much cause for alarm?"

"Only within a few years. Thanks to the ungracious mode of executing the law, it effected less mischief during a century and a half than might have been anticipated. When persons could be relieved only in their own parishes, and when that relief was given in a manner which exposed the applicant to a feeling of degradation among his neighbours, few asked relief who could by any means subsist without it. Workhouses, too, were regarded as odious places, and to the workhouse paupers must go, in those days, if out of employ; and all who had any sense of comfort or decency delayed to the very last moment classing themselves with paupers. So that, up to 1795, the state was less burdened with pauperism than, from the bad system it had adopted, it deserved."

"What makes you fix that precise date?"

"Because in that year a change took place in the administration of the poor-laws, which has altered the state of the country disastrously. There was a scarcity that season, and consequently much difficulty with our paupers, among whom now appeared not only the helpless, but able-bodied, industrious men, who could no longer maintain their families. It was most unfortunately agreed by the county magistrates, first of Berkshire, and afterwards of other parts of

the middle and south of England, that such and such ought to be and should henceforth be the weekly income of the labouring poor; and a table was published, exhibiting the proportions of this income according to the size of families and the price of bread."

"But how could that mend the matter?" exclaimed Louisa. "These magistrates and the public could not increase the quantity of bread, and where was the use, then, of giving money? It was merely taking bread from those who had earned it, to give it to those who had not."

"Just so; but these magistrates did not happen to view the matter as you do; and we have great cause to rue their short-sightedness.—Mark how the system has worked!—All labourers are given to understand that they ought to have a gallon loaf of wheaten bread weekly for each member of their families, and one over; that is, three loaves for two people, and eleven for ten. John comes and says that his wife and four children and himself must have seven loaves, costing twelve shillings; but that he can earn only nine shillings. As a matter of course, three shillings are given him from the parish.—Next comes Will. He has a wife and six children, and must have nine loaves, or fourteen shillings and eightpence. He earns ten shillings, and receives the rest from the parish. Hal is a vagabond whom no capitalist will admit within his gates. Work is out of the question; but his family must be fed, and want eight loaves: so

the parish pays him-thirteen shillings and eightpence."

"So that, in fact," observed Louisa, "eleven loaves are earned by these three families, and the twelve still deficient are taken from other earners. How very unjust! How very ruinous! But does this kind of management still go on?"

"Universally in the agricultural counties, with such slight variations as are introduced by local circumstances.—Great allowance must be made for the pressure of difficulties at the time when this system was adopted; but the system itself is execrable, however well-meaning its authors. The industry of the lower classes has been half ruined by it, and their sense of independence almost annihilated. The public burdens have become well nigh overwhelming; and the proportion of supply and demand in all the departments of industry is so deranged that there is no saying when it can be rectified."

"It is rather hard upon the poor," observed Louisa, "that we should complain of their improvidence when we bribe them to it by promising subsistence at all events. Paupers will spend and marry faster than their betters as long as this system lasts."

"It makes one indignant to see it," replied her brother. "I am now attending an industrious young man, a shopkeeper, who has been attached for years, but will not marry till his circumstances justify it. He has paid more to the rates every year; and half a dozen vagabond

paupers have married in his parish during the time that he has been waiting."

"All these things, brother, bring us round to the question, what are we to do?"

"You must enlighten the children in your school, and all the poor you have any influence over, Louisa. As for me,—it is unnecessary to open my lips upon it to my country patients, for I seldom enter a farmhouse without hearing complaints of the system. But our towns are too quiet about the matter. General, calm, enlightened deliberation is required, and that without loss of time.—I am prepared with testimony respecting the increase of sickness and mortality which accompanies the augmentation of the poor-rate. Most happy should I be to have the opportunity of delivering it."

"Our wise men," said Louisa, "must start afresh the old question, and the nation must gather round them to be taught anew, '*What is Charity?*'"

Chapter IV.

PAUPER LIFE.

No one could pass the gates of the workhouse on pay-day without seeing how much misery existed among the claimants of out-door relief;

but few could guess, without following these applicants to their homes, how much guilt attended, not only their poverty, but the advancement of their claims;—guilt which would never have been dreamed of unless suggested and encouraged by a system which destroys the natural connexion between labour and its rewards.

Mrs. Bell's husband was now out of work, after having earned and regularly spent twenty-five shillings a week for many months. His third child had died after a long illness, and one which had proved expensive to the parish, from whence this family now derived four and sixpence a week. Mrs. Bell, who always went herself to receive the weekly allowance, lest her husband, through his dislike of the business, should not "manage it cleverly," took credit to herself for having given notice that the doctor need not take any more trouble about her poor boy, as he was past hope and nothing more could be done for him; but she omitted to state the reason of his being past hope, (viz., that he was dead,) because it would have been inconvenient to give up the allowance received on his account. So no doctor came to ask awkward questions, and the money was a great comfort indeed. Mrs. Bell had truly managed the whole matter very "cleverly." She got another blanket, even out of due season, because the boy was apt to be cold at night. The Sick Poor Society allowed her a certain sum weekly as long as the child lived; and two or three kind neighbours gave her leave to call at their houses when they had a wholesome

joint for dinner, to carry away a slice and vegetables for the patient; and if all these desired her to call on the same day, she managed to borrow a couple of basins and obey directions; for though the patient could not eat three dinners at a time, nor perhaps even one, there were others in the house who liked savoury meat, and it was only returning their thanks for the "nourishing cordial" in poor Bob's name. Then came the lamentations over the impossibility of burying him decently, and the thanksgivings for a half-crown here and there for the purpose; and then hints about any old rag of black, and the pain to maternal feelings of having no mourning for so dear a child; and the tears at sight of the black stuff gown, and the black silk bonnet, and the black cotton shawl,—all so much too good for her before they were put into her hands, but pronounced rusty, rotten old rubbish when surveyed at home. Then came the commands to the children to say nothing about Bob unless they were asked, and the jealousy of that prying, malicious old widow Pine, who peeped through her lattice a full hour before she should properly have awaked, and just in time to see the coffin carried out of the yard. Lastly, came the subtraction of poor Bob's parish allowance from the rest before the money was delivered into her husband's hand. The early waking of widow Pine, and the use she might make of what she saw, no mortal could prevent; but all that devolved upon herself, Mrs. Bell flattered herself that she had "managed very cleverly."

One day when she was going to the workhouse for her allowance, her husband accompanied her part of the way. Widow Pine was before them in the street, stepping feebly along, supported by a stick in one hand and by the wall on the other side.

"She'll trip over the tatters of her gown," exclaimed Bell. "Poor old soul! she is not fit to walk the streets,—bent double, and ready to be knocked down by the first push. She will not trouble the parish long."

"She will die in the streets," replied his wife, "and with bad words in her mouth. She is for ever prying about people's affairs, and saying malicious things of her neighbours. The old hypocrite! she sits see-sawing herself, and drawling hymns while she combs her grey hair that never was cut, and all the while pricking up her ears for scandal."

"You and she never had much love to lose," replied Bell, obeying his wife's motion to cross the street to avoid passing at the widow's elbow. She saw them, however, and sent her well-known piping after them, striking the pavement with her stick, to attract the notice of the passers by.

"I wish you joy of your blue gown, Mrs. Bell! 'Tis no great thing to lose a child that comes to life again every parish pay-day!"

"Never mind the old wretch," said Bell. "By the by, I have observed you put off your black sometimes. What is it for?"

"The officers are so quick-sighted about a new gown. They might take off some pay if

they knew I had a friend that would give me a gown; and it really is a rag not worth disputing about."

The husband was satisfied, but much annoyed with the abuse that came from over the way.

"I'll crush you, yet!" railed the old woman. "I can, and I will, such a pack of knaves and liars as you are! You'll soon hear from the parish, I warrant you! You'll soon be posted for cheats!"

"I say, goody, hold your foul tongue, or I'll correct you as you little think for," said Bell.

"You! what harm can you do me, I wonder? —you that are lost, and I a holy person."

"A holy person! How do you mean holy?" asked Bell, laughing.

"How do you mean holy! Why, sure of heaven, to be sure. I'm sure of heaven, I tell you, and you are lost! God has given me nothing else, for a miserable life I've had of it; but he has given me grace, and is not that enough?"

"You must keep it close locked up somewhere, for never a one found out you had it," said Mrs. Bell. "I I doubt the Talbots that have been so kind to you have never seen much of your grace."

"Kind to me! The proud, mean, slandering folks! You little know the Talbots if you think they can be generous to anybody. They'll meet you hereafter when I shall be in a better place!"

"That is pretty well," said Bell, "when you have had bed and board, clothes and comfort,

from that family from your youth up. Suppose I tell them what you say, neighbour."

"As you please. It is only what I have told them myself. I shall look to hear you curse them soon, Mrs. Bell, for they have been told how you take parish money for your dead child. So you got a blanket to keep the boy warm? He's in a hot place now,—a little unregenerate devil as he was! If he was not to be saved, you are well off to be rid of him so soon."

The husband and wife quickened their pace till they got out of hearing, the one full of disgust, the other of the fear of detection. She was anxious to receive her money before the widow should arrive; but there was already such a crowd about the gates that she saw she must wait long for her turn.

Two of the paupers had secured a seat on the door-step of an opposite house: the one, a well known beggar, whose occupation had never been effectually interfered with by the police; the other, a young man, who was jeered at as a stranger by some who weekly resorted to this place. One gave him joy of his admission to the pauper brotherhood; another asked how he liked waiting on the great; a third observed that he could not judge till he had waited two hours in the snow of a winter's noon.

"Never fret yourself for their gibes, Hunt," said Childe, the beggar. "You are more in the way to do well than you have been this many a day. You may make what you will of the great, if you do but know how to set about it."

"I'm glad to hear it," said Hunt, fidgeting about in a state of great agitation. "I'm sure the rich know well enough what to make of us. Not a word do we ever hear from them about our right to be kept from starvation; and they expect us to be wonderfully grateful for a parish dole, while they cut off a pound of meat a week from every poor soul's allowance within yonder walls, and advise us to mix rye with our wheaten bread.—'Tis true, as I'm alive! A man told me so just now as he came out of yonder gate."

"Well; let us get the pound of meat for our share if we can. I'll bet you a wager, Hunt, I'll get a shilling a week more out of them for this very prank of theirs."

"Done!" cried Hunt. "I bet you a penny roll they will be too sharp for you."

"A penny roll!" exclaimed Childe. "A pint of wine is the lowest bet I ever lay, man. A pint of red port to be paid to-night. Come!"

"You might as well ask me to bet a diamond," said Hunt, laughing bitterly. "How am I to get port wine?"

"I'll show you when our business here is done," said Childe. "Your father was my friend, or I should not open my confidence so easily. But just stand a minute at that fat woman's elbow, will you? Just to screen me a bit. There; that will do. Don't look round till I bid you."

When Hunt had permission to look round, he scarcely knew his companion. Childe had slipped off his worsted stocking and bound it over his forehead and chin, so as to look very sickly.

He sprinkled a few grains from his snuff-box into his eyes, so as to look blear-eyed, and forthwith set himself to tremble all over, except his right arm which appeared stiff.

"I have had a slight stroke of palsy this week, you see," said he. "I can just get abroad to show that I must have another shilling a week.—Hang it, Hunt, it is not worth the trouble for such a trifle, if it was not for the bet!"

Hunt thought a shilling a week no trifle, and wondered how Childe came by such mighty notions.

"Because I've an e at the end of my name, man, that's all. That little letter makes a great man of me. It is worth house and board and tobacco and clothes to me for the whole of my old age. You think I am mad, I see; but, hark'ee! did you never hear of Childe's Hospital?"

"Yes; near London. Is not it?"

"Yes; and I have the next turn there, and a merry life I make of it till I get in, fearing that the confinement may be rather too close for my liking. However, it is not a thing to be sneezed at. The money gathers so fast that 'tis thought we Childes shall have silver spoons by the time I enter the brotherhood. I like gentility, and I would give up a little roving for the sake of it."

"But how had you the luck to get on the list?" inquired Hunt. "Who befriended you?"

"Lord bless you, how little you know about such things! 'Twas I befriended the trustees, not they me. They are beholden to me for

saving them the trouble of searching farther for a Child with an *e* at the end of his name. None others will do by the terms of the bequest, which is for the support of thirteen aged men of the same name with the pious founder.—A deal of pride in his piety, I doubt, Hunt.—Well: the funds have grown and grown, and the trustees can't use them up any how, though their dinners and plate and knick-knackeries are the finest of the fine, I'm told; and the thirteen aged men have all they ask for. You should see what a figure I cut on the list of candidates,—alone in my glory, as they say;—'honest industry'—'undeserved poverty'—'infirmities of advancing years,' and so forth. I wonder they did not make a soldier or a sailor of me at once,—'to justify their choice,' as they finish by saying. Why, man, you look downright envious!"

"I wish any great man of the name of Hunt had endowed an hospital," sighed Hunt; "but I am afraid there would be too many claimants to give me a chance."

"To be sure. There's not one in ten thousand meets with such luck as mine. Bless you! there would be a string of Hunts a mile long, in such a case."

And the beggar threw himself back, laughing heartily; but suddenly stopped, saying,

"Mercy! how nearly I had lost my bet! People in the palsy do not laugh, do they?"

"When do you expect to get into this hospital?" inquired Hunt, who could think of nothing

else; "and how do you keep yourself so sleek meanwhile?"

"I shall depart to that better place when any one of the old pensioners departs to a better still," replied the beggar; "meanwhile, I grow fat in the way I will show you presently. Now for it. It is our turn. Do you keep just behind me and see how I manage."

The method was worth watching. Childe won his way slowly among the groups, preserving his paralytic appearance wonderfully, and exciting the compassion of all who took notice of him.

"And who may you be, friend?" inquired the officer, as Childe approached the counter where the pay was being distributed. "Bless me! Childe! My poor fellow, how you are altered! You have had a stroke, I am afraid?"

"If it's ordained that the grasshopper must become a burden," said Childe, mumbling in his speech, "we must submit, and be thankful to have lived so long. But you will not refuse me another shilling, sir."

The officer was about to comply, when an assistant who stood by him remarked that the applicant looked wonderfully ruddy for a paralytic man, and that his eyes were as bright as ever. Hunt, who stood behind, jogged his arm, from which the stick immediately fell. Childe appeared to make several ineffectual efforts to pick it up, and looked imploringly towards the people behind him, as if complaining that they pressed upon him. The officer spoke sharply to Hunt,—

"Pick up the man's stick, you brute! You knocked it out of his hand, and you stand staring as if you liked to see how helpless he is.—You observe, John, his right arm is quite useless. Give him another shilling."

Hunt wished he had abstained from his practical hint. Before he could state his case, a woman got the officer's ear.—Sarah Simpson, spinster, by name and title. She was a clean, tight little body, poorly dressed, and sickly in appearance. She appeared excessively nervous, her eyes rolling and her head twitching incessantly. She pleaded for more pay, saying that she had a note from one of the guardians respecting it: but for this note her trembling hands searched in vain, while she was pushed about by the people who still continued to fill the room.

"Make haste, good woman," said the officer. "We can't wait on you all day."

At this moment, the poor creature turned round and swore a tremendous oath at a man who had taken upon him to hurry her.

"Upon my word, that is pretty well for a spinster!" observed the officer. "If you are not satisfied with your pay, madam, I would recommend your going into the workhouse. You have nobody dependent on you, I believe, and I should think the workhouse a very proper place for you."

"She has been there already," said the assistant. "Her tongue put me in mind of that.

The master tells me such oaths were never heard within the walls as this woman's."

"Mercy, gentlemen, what did I say?" asked the poor creature, whose eyes now rolled frightfully. "I am not myself at times, gentlemen, when I'm hurried, gentlemen. I have such a —such a—such a strife and strangling here," she continued fretfully, tearing open her gown, and shaking herself like a passionate child.

"Well, well, that's enough of your symptoms; we are not your doctors," said the assistant; "take your money and make way."

In a hurried manner she closed her gown and drew back, forgetting her money, which however Hunt put into her hand.

"Only two shillings!" exclaimed the poor creature, returning timidly to the counter. "A'n't I to have what the gentleman recommended, then, sir?"

"You are to have no more money, so let us have no more words," said the officer. "You have your full share already."

Mrs. Bell, whose period of waiting seemed coming to an end, advanced to say that Sarah Simpson was subject to flights at times, when she did not know what words came out of her mouth; but that she was a humble, pious Christian as could be.

"I am afraid your recommendation is not worth much," observed the officer. "Let us see.—Your husband, yourself, and how many children?"

Mrs. Bell, suspecting herself suspected, hesitated whether to say four or five. She shaped her answer dubiously,—

"Four and sixpence a week is what we have had, sir."

"How many children?" thundered the officer.

"Four," admitted the terrified Mrs. Bell, who was glad to get away with three and sixpence, and a rating from the men in authority, accompanied by sneers and jests from the hearers, On her way home she laid the entire blame on the ill-nature of her neighbours, especially on the spite of old widow Pine.

Hunt obtained a small allowance, and left the place, grumbling at its amount and at the prospect of having to spend it all in wine to pay his wager. Childe, however, gave him his first lesson in the mysteries of begging. Under the pretence of sport, he practised the art for the first time in a street on the outskirts of the city, through which many gentlemen passed in their way home to dinner from their counting-houses. Hunt was astonished at his own success, and began to calculate how much alms might be given away in a year in this single street, if he and Childe had the begging department all to themselves. It might be enough, he thought, to enable them to set up a shop.—When the parish clock struck eight, Childe came to him and said it was near supper-time. Hunt was glad of it, for he was very hungry, having had nothing since morning. Childe begged pardon for the freedom

of calling him a fool, but could not conceive why he had not taken a chop in the middle of the day, as it was his custom to do: it was sticking rather too close to the main chance to sit without food from morning till evening for fear of missing a monied passenger.

Hunt followed his tutor to a public-house in the heart of the city, called the Cow and Snuffers. Hunt had supposed this house too respectable to be the resort of beggars; but was informed that the fraternity thought nothing too good for them when their day's business was at an end, and the time of refreshment was come; not as it comes to poor artizans in their sordid homes, but rather to convivial men of wealth.

"Stay!" said Childe, as they were about to enter the house. "How much can you afford to spend? Five shillings, I suppose, at the least.—Never start at such a trifle as that, man! You will make it up between four and five to-morrow afternoon."

Hunt had not intended to beg any more; but he deferred the consideration of the matter for the present, and followed Childe to a small room upstairs, furnished with washing apparatus, and with a wardrobe well stocked with respectable clothing. Three or four persons were already in this room dressing, their beggar apparel being thrown into a corner, and looking-glass, brushes, and towels, being all in requisition. Hunt was declared, after a brushing, to be presentable without a change of apparel, especially as he was a stranger. Childe was about to open

a door on the same floor, when a waiter stopped his hand and intimated that they must mount higher, as the room in question was occupied by the monthly meeting of the Benefit Club. The cloth was laid upstairs, and it was hoped the apartment might be found quite as comfortable.

On the question being put to the vote among the beggars already assembled, it was pronounced an intolerable nuisance to be turned out of their apartment regularly once a month by these shabby fellows, who were always thinking how they should save money instead of spending it. The landlord was rung for, and requested to intimate to the workpeople that a large convivial party desired to change rooms with them. The landlord objected that the apartment had been positively engaged from the beginning by the club, and he could not think of turning them out. Being assailed, however, by various questions,—how he could bring the two companies into comparison?—whether he could honestly declare that the custom of the club was worth more than a few shillings in the year?—and, lastly, how he would like to lose the patronage of the beggars' company?—he consented to carry a message—the answer to which was a civil refusal to budge. Message after message was sent in vain. The club, having ascertained that there were unoccupied rooms in the house which would suit the purpose of the other party as well, very properly chose to keep the landlord to his engagement.

"It's monstrous, upon my soul!" cried a lady

beggar, making her entrée with a curtsey, which she had first practised on the boards of a barn, when personating Juliet,—"it is really monstrous to be poked into an attic in this way;—and to miss the view of the cathedral, too, which is so attractive to strangers!"

The appearance of this lady suggested a last appeal.

"Tell them," said Childe, "that there's a lady in the case,—a lady who is partial to the view of the cathedral."

The club sent their compliments, and would be happy to accommodate the lady with a seat among them, whence she might view the cathedral at leisure, while they settled their accounts.

The club were pronounced ill-mannered wretches, and the representations of the landlord about the probable overroasting of the geese were listened to. Supper was ordered. Roast goose top and bottom;—an informality for which apology was made to Hunt, on the ground that the company liked nothing so well as goose in the prime of the pea-season;—abundance of pease; delicate lamb chops and asparagus, and so forth. Hunt had never before beheld such a feast.

"It will be long enough," observed a junior member, "before those shabby fellows below treat themselves with such a set-out as this. I never liked their doings when I was an operative: I was one of the other sort."

"What other sort?"

"One of the good livers, and not one of the frugal. I and some friends of mine used to sup something in this fashion when we earned near three guineas a week. We used to get our fowls from London."

"Bravo! and what made you leave off trade?"

"I was turned off in bad times, and I shall tell you no more; for I hate to think of that winter of cold and water-gruel. My nose was positively frost-bitten, and my stomach like a wet bladder most part of the twenty-four hours. Pah! it was horrid."

"You would have exchanged conditions with one of the frugal at that time, probably?"

"Why, I did envy one his bit of fire, and another his mess of broth; and the next winter I may envy them again, for I hear the magistrates have got scent of me; but no more of that now.—Miss Molly, your very good health! May I ask what you have done with your seven small children?"

"Left some of them on the bridge, and the rest in the Butchers'-row, with directions where to find me when the halfpence grow too heavy for them. I hope it is going to rain so that they will get little; for I don't want to be bored with the brats any more to-night."

"They must be quite too much for you sometimes."

"Hang it! they are. It is all I can do to remember their parentage, in case of its being convenient to return them. Two of them are getting to a troublesome age now,—so imper-

tinent! I must really get rid of them, and borrow another baby or two."

"Gentlemen," said Childe, when the cloth was drawn and the door closed behind the waiter, "we have long wanted a general-officer in our company, and I flatter myself I have found one who will fill the department excellently, if he can be induced to join us. Hunt, what say you? Will you be one of us?"

Hunt wished to know what would be expected of him.

"The fact is," said Childe, "I took a hint during my travels last year, which is too good to be let drop. General Y——, whom, as a boy, I used to see reviewing the troops, gamed and drank himself down into pauperism, and I met him last year walking the streets, not begging, but taking a vast deal of money; for it was whispered who he was, and everybody gave him something. 'Tis a case of the first water, you see, and it is a pity not to profit by it. You will find your part very easy. You have only to let your beard grow a little, and walk barefoot and bareheaded, buttoning your coat up to your chin in the way of military men, and as if to hide the want of a shirt. You must look straight before you as if you saw nobody, and keep your left hand in your bosom and your right by your side. You will find many a shilling put into it, I expect, and very little copper.—If you think it as well to vary the story, we can make you an admiral, with some resemblance to a pig-tail; but

you are hardly round-shouldered enough for a seaman, and there is something in the upright military walk that catches the eye better."

Hunt had some scruples of conscience, which were discovered and combated with wonderful address by his tutor. The argument which proved finally successful was, that if he believed he had a right to comfortable support, and could not obtain it either by work, or by allowance from the public fund, he must get it in any way he could.—Nobody inquired whether this permission was to extend to thieving, in case the gentry should take it into their heads to leave off giving alms; nor did any one trouble himself to consider where, short of murder, the line was to be drawn in the prosecution of this supposed right. Hunt had some confused notion that the act of *begging* is inconsistent with a claim of *right:* if he changed his petition into a demand, the act became one of highway robbery; between which and petty larceny and burglary, there are only degrees of the same guilt: there must be some flaw in this reasoning, since the gallows stood at the end of it. It might have been proved to him that, if he had the supposed right to support, he was now about to urge it in the wrong quarter; and that, therefore, no species of begging is defensible on this very common plea. It might also have been proved that the right itself is purely imaginary; but he was now in a company whence it was most convenient to banish all questions of right except those in-

volved in the settlement of bets, and of precedence in taking the chair.

There was much laughter at the sober folks below; the murmur of whose business-like voices rose occasionally during a pause, and who were heard descending the stairs before the clock struck ten. The waiter just then came up with a fresh supply of gin, Miss Molly having an inclination for another glass.

"How much do those people spend each time, pray?"

"Twopence a-piece, and a shilling over."

In reply to the mirth which followed, Childe pointed out that the very object of their meeting was the promotion of frugality; and that his only wonder therefore was, that they did not meet somewhere where they need spend nothing at all.

The waiter, who had looked grave during the laugh, now observed that the members of the club drank so little because they had something better to do. They read the newspapers, and took an important part in elections, and had the satisfaction of helping one another in many ways. He could speak to the satisfaction of being a member of one of these clubs, and the pride he felt in it. There was no occasion to fear any magistrate or constable living, or to have anything to do with the parish; and they were, moreover, prepared so as to be at no man's mercy in times of trouble and sickness; and when they were past work, there was a fund to

go to, over which they held a right; and this, in his opinion, was worth more than jollity with want in prospect. The man was ordered away, and threatened with being thrown out of the window for his impertinence, and a riotous chorus was struck up on his disappearance; but there were, possibly, others besides Hunt, who sighed at his words, before they began to sing in praise of gin and revelry.

Chapter V.

COUSIN MARSHALL'S CHARITIES.

Marshall was a member of the benefit club which met at the Cow and Snuffers. He had followed his father's advice and example by enrolling his name in it while yet a very young man; and he was now every day farther from repenting that he had thus invested the earnings of his youth. His companions, who knew him to be what is commonly called 'a poor creature,' smiled, and said that his club served him instead of a set of wits. He was not a man whose talents could have kept him afloat in bad times, and his club served admirably for a cork-jacket. His wife, who never seemed to have found out how much cleverer she was than her husband, put the matter in a somewhat different light.

She attributed to her husband all the respectability they were enabled to maintain, and which concealed from the knowledge of many that Marshall earned but moderate wages from being a slow and dull, though steady workman. She gave him the credit, not only of the regularity of their little household, (which was, indeed, much promoted by the sobriety of his habits,) but of the many kindnesses which they rendered to their neighbours, — from sending in a fresh egg to an invalid next door, to taking home two orphans to be maintained. If it had not been for her husband's way of storing his earnings, as cousin Marshall truly observed, these offices of goodwill would have been out of the question; and this observation, made now and then at the close of a hard day's work, when Sally was trying to knit beside him, dropping, unperceived, as many stitches, poor girl! as she knitted, and when little Ann was at play among his own children before the door, made the slow smile break over his grave face, and constituted him a happy man.

Sally's eyes grew daily worse. Mrs. Marshall had long suspected, but could never make sure of the fact, that she injured them much by crying. As often as Sally had reason to suppose she was watched, she was ready with the complaint "My eyes always water so;" and how many of these tears came from disease, and how many from grief, it was difficult to make out. She was seldom merry, now and then a little fretful, but generally quiet and grave. Her great pleasures

were to sit beside cousin Marshall, on the rare occasions when she could turn out all the little ones to play, and mend clothes of an afternoon; or to forget how old she was growing, and be taken on John Marshall's knee, and rest her aching forehead on his shoulder when he had an evening hour to spare. From the one she heard many stories of her mother as a girl no bigger than herself; and from the other, tidings of Ned and Jane, when, as often happened, John had been to see them. Mrs. Marshall now began to intersperse frequent notices of the Blind Asylum in her talk, trying to excite poor Sally's interest in the customs, employments, and advantages of the place; and she gave her husband a private hint to do the same, in order to familiarise the girl with the thought of the place she must shortly go to. John obeyed the hint; but he did it awkwardly. Whatever was the subject now started in his presence, it always ended in praises of the Blind Asylum, and declarations how much he should like to go there if it should please the Almighty to take away his eyesight. Sally was not long in fathoming the intention of this. At first she pressed down her forehead closer when John said 'a-hem' on approaching the subject; but soon she slid from his knee, and went away at the first sign.

"I think, John," said his wife, one evening when this happened, "poor Sally has heard enough for the present about this Asylum. It pains her sadly, I am afraid; but the time must be at hand, for she is very nearly blind now;

and as to a vacancy, some of the people are very old."

"I was going to say, wife, one of them is dead, and Sally can be got in on Saturday, as Mr. Burke bids me tell you. I met him to-day, and that was his message."

Cousin Marshall's thoughts were at once painfully divided, between satisfaction at having Sally thus comfortably provided for, and the sorrow of parting with her; between the doubt how her clothes were to be got ready, and the dread of telling the girl what was to come to pass. She decided on sending her to bed in the first place, in order to hold a consultation in peace; so she went in search of her, led her up herself to the little nook which had been partitioned off for her as an invalid, helped her to bed, instead of letting Ann do it, swallowed her tears while hearing the simple prayer she had taught her, kissed her, and bade her good night.

"Cousin Marshall," said the little girl, after listening a minute, "what are you doing at the window?"

"Hanging up an apron, my dear, to keep the morning sun off your face."

"O, don't do that! I don't see much of the light now, and I like to feel the sun and know when it shines in."

"Just as you like. But what are you folding your clothes under your head for? You shall have a pillow. O yes; I have a pillow—I'll bring it."

Sally nestled her head down upon it as if for

comfortable repose, while her cousin went down to meditate on her concerns. It was settled between the husband and wife, that either Ned or Jane should be immediately taken home in Sally's place, and that circumstances at the workhouse should determine which it should be.

Mrs. Marshall was wont to sleep as soundly as her toil and wholesome state of mind and conscience deserved; but this night she was disturbed by thoughts of the disclosure she must make in the morning. She scarcely closed her eyes while it was dark, and after it began to dawn, lay broad awake, watching the pink clouds that sailed past her little lattice, and planning how the washing, ironing, and preparing of Sally's few clothes was to be done, in addition to the day's business. Presently she thought she heard the noise of somebody stirring behind the little partition. She sat up and looked about her, thinking it might be one of the many children in the room; but they were all sound asleep in their wonted and divers postures. After repeated listenings, she softly rose to go and see what could ail Sally. She found her at the window; not, alas! watching the sunrise—for no sunrise should Sally ever more see—but drying her pillow in its first rays. The moment she perceived she was observed, she tossed the pillow into bed again, and scrambled after it; but it was too late to avoid explanation.

"It grieves me to chide you, my dear," said cousin Marshall; "but how should your eyes get better, if you take no more care of them?

Here is your pillow wet through, wetter than it could have been if you had not been crying all night, and you are looking up at the flaring sky, instead of shutting your poor eyes in sleep."

"If I sleep ever so sound, cousin, I always wake when the sun rises, and I try sometimes how much I can see of him. It was scarce a blink to-day; so you need not fear its making my eyes ache any more. They never will be tried with bright light again! It is little more than a month since I could see yon tiled roof glistening at sunrise, and now I can't."

"That is no rule, my dear; the sun has moved somewhat, so that we can't see it strike straight upon it. That tiled roof looks blue to me now, and dull."

"Does it indeed?" cried Sally, starting up. "However, that is no matter, cousin; for my eyes are certainly very bad, and soon I shall not be able to do anything."

"O, but I hope you will soon be able to do more than ever I have been able to teach you. If you have not me beside you to take up stitches in your knitting, you will learn not to let them drop; and that is far better. And you will make sashline, and the more delicate sort of baskets; and you are better off than most at their first going into the Asylum, in having learned to wash a floor neatly, and to join your squares by the feel, almost as well as we that can see. Miss Burke could scarcely believe you were Sally, the first day she came, you were washing the floor so nicely."

Sally would have smiled at the compliment, but that she was too full of panic about the Asylum.

"But, cousin," she said, "it will be all so strange! I don't know any of the people, and I shall have no one to talk to And that brown stuff dress, and little black bonnet, and the white handkerchiefs, all alike! I don't like to wear a charity dress. I remember——"

Before Sally could relate what it was that she remembered, her cousin stopped her with a gentle rebuke. She did not mind what Sally said about the place and the people being strange; it was natural, and it was an evil soon cured, and she hoped there would be less to teaze the girl in the Asylum, than among the rough children at home; but she could not see what reason there was for so much pride as should disdain to wear a charity dress. Sally explained that it was not pride exactly; but she remembered how she and her sisters used to stare at the pupils of the Blind Asylum, as they met them going to church, and how she got out of the way in a great hurry, and followed them to see how they would manage to turn in at the gate; and sometimes when the master was not observing, she would look quite under their bonnets, without their finding it out, to see what their countenances were like. She should not like now to have anybody do the same to her. It was in vain that her cousin reasoned, that if she did not know it, it would not signify. The bare idea made her cry again as if she could not be comforted.

"You did not think at those times, Sally, of

doing as you would be done by. If anybody had told you then that you would be one of those pupils, you would have left off following them. But it seems to me that blind people remember as soon as any body to do as they would be done by; and so I hope you will find. I have often been in that Asylum, and it cheers one to see how cheerful the people are. 'It is God's will,' they say, when one asks them about their blindness. They are always ready with the word, 'It is God's will.' And it is not the word only, for they make the best of His will. If they make any little mistake, or do any little mischief unawares, they are thankful to be set right, and seem to forget it directly. But I hope you need not go there, Sally, to learn to say, cheerfully, 'It is God's will.'"

Sally tried to stop her tears.

"And as for doing as you would be done by," continued cousin Marshall, "now is your time. You have always found my husband tender to you, have not you?—and little Ann ready to guide and help you? Well, you don't know the concern John would feel, if he saw you leave us unwillingly, and I am afraid we could scarcely pacify Ann; but if you go with a steady heart and a cheerful face, they will see at once what a fine thing it is for you to be got into such a place. Just think now, if it was Ann instead of you, how would it make you most easy to see her?"

"O, cousin Marshall, I will try. Many's the time I have been glad it was not Ann. But when—when?"

Her cousin told her directly, that she was to go in the next day but one, so that she would soon be settled now, and find her lot come easy to her. After talking awhile longer with her so as to leave her quite composed, and bidding her go to sleep, as it was far too early to get up yet, she left her, and set quietly about her business, keeping on the watch to prevent husband and children making any noise in dressing, that Sally might sleep, if possible, into the middle of the day. One object in beginning her toil so early, was to have time to go to the workhouse, in the afternoon, with the news of the release of one of the children there.

On entering the workhouse, she heard more news than she came to tell. A service had been obtained for Jane at farmer Dale's, a little way in the country, whither she was to be removed next market-day. Immediately on the announcement of the plan, Ned had disappeared, and had not been heard of since.

Jane seemed to regard this event but little, so occupied was she with making up her mind whether on the whole she liked the change or not. It was a fine thing, she supposed, to be out of the workhouse; but there would be an end of workhouse frolics, and perhaps harder toil than she had been accustomed to. On cousin Marshall's inquiry, whether she had not earned a little money to carry away in her pocket, she replied that she had been obliged to spend it as fast as earned. How? Chiefly in buying a dinner every Monday when she could; for she could

never abide milk-broth; and the rest went for a better bonnet for Sundays, the one she brought with her being too shabby to wear at church and the gardens.

"Church and the gardens!" exclaimed cousin Marshall, very sternly. "It is mostly vain and dainty girls like you, Jane, that come to learn how welcome milk is to an empty stomach, and that are kept away from church, to say nothing of the gardens, for want of decent covering. It is a great misfortune, Jane, to be a parish girl, but it is a far greater to forget that you are one."

There was much matter of concern for John when he returned from work this night, in speculating upon where poor Ned could be, and upon what would become of Jane, with her very handsome face, her bold manner, and her vain and giddy mind. The good couple hoped she was going to a hard service, where she would be out of the way of temptation.

Chapter VI.

PARISH CHARITIES.

John Marshall ran no great risk in offering to take his oath that poor Ned was after no harm. He was the last person in the world likely to plan mischief, or to wish to be idle with impunity. The fact was that he had long been uneasy on

Jane's account, seeing that she was not steady enough to take care of herself; and the idea of being separated from her, added to the disgust of his pauper situation, which he had been bred up to detest, was too much for him. He had absconded with the intention of finding work, if possible, in or near Titford, the village where farmer Dale lived. For the sake of leaving his pauper dress behind him, he chose Sunday for the day of departure, and stole away from church in the afternoon. He had but threepence in his pocket, one penny of which went for bread that night, when he had walked two-thirds of the distance, and found a place of rest under a stack. Another penny was spent in like manner at the baker's shop at Titford, on his arrival there at ten on the Monday morning. He found a stream at which to refresh himself; and then, trying how stout-hearted he could make himself, inquired the way to farmer Dale's, peeped through the farm-yard gate, and seeing a woman feeding the fowls, went in, and asked for work.

"We have nothing to spare for strangers," said she. "We must give more than we can afford to our own people."

"I ask no charity," said Ned. "I ask for work."

"Where do you come from?"

"From a distance. No matter where."

The woman, who proved to be Mrs. Dale, was afraid he had run away from his parents and was a naughty boy. Ned explained that he was an orphan, and only desired that it should be

proved whether he was naughty or not, by setting him to work, and trying whether he did not labour hard and honestly. Had he any money? He produced his penny. How did he get it? He earned it. Why not earn more in the same way? It was impossible. What could he do? He thought he could do whatever boys of his age could generally do. How would he manage if he could not get work here? He would walk on till he found some. Begging by the way, Mrs. Dale supposed. No, he never begged. Where did he sleep last night? Under a stack. Further back than this it was impossible to gather any information of his proceedings. Mrs. Dale went in search of her husband, to plead for the boy,—a thing which she would not have done, unless she had been particularly interested in the lad; for farmer Dale had grown sadly harsh of late about beggars and idle people. He proved so on this occasion; for instead of hearing what Ned had to say, he made signs to him over the fence to be gone, and when the poor lad lingered, shook his fist at him in a way so threatening, as to show that there was no hope.

Ned went to two more places with no better success. One large establishment remained to be tried; and, disheartened as he was, Ned determined to apply; though it was hardly to be expected that the master of such a place would take up with such a labourer as he. He resolved to make his application to no one but the master himself, and sat down to wait patiently for a

good opportunity, which occurred when the gentleman came home to dinner, and his wife met him at the gate of the flower-garden. Ned followed, and respectfully urged his petition. Long and close was the examination he underwent, before the gentleman, equally struck with his reserve on some points and his openness on others, resolved to give him a trial. Ned was well satisfied with the offer of twopence that night, and of fourpence a day afterwards, as long as he should pick up stones and do inferior work of other kinds to the satisfaction of his employer. Mr. Effingham, for that was the gentleman's name, would not allow him to spend his third penny for his dinner; but ordered him a slice of bread and meat from the kitchen; after eating which, Ned set to work with a grave face and a lightened heart.

On receiving his twopence, he was asked where he meant to lodge. He did not know; but if there was any empty barn or shed where he might lay down a little straw, he would take it as a favour to be allowed to sleep there till he should have saved a few pence to pay for a lodging. He was taken at his word, and for a month slept soundly in the corner of an old barn, his only disturbance being the rats, three or four of which were frequently staring him full in the face when he woke in the morning.

After a few days, he began to linger about farmer Dale's premises, at leisure times, in hopes of ascertaining whether Jane had arrived, but

could see nothing of her, and did not choose to inquire, knowing that after once having met her they could frequently exchange a few words without incurring the danger to himself in which he might be placed by asking for her. He was beginning to fear that the plan might be changed, and that Jane was not coming at all, when he heard tidings of her in a way that he little expected.

He was working in the field one day, when the bailiff approached, accompanied by farmer Dale. They were discussing the very common subject among farmers of the inconveniences of pauper labour.

"Don't you find these parish children a terrible plague?" inquired Dale. "They are the idlest, most impudent people I ever had to do with."

"It is just the same with us," replied the bailiff, "the men being quite as bad as the boys, or worse. How should it be otherwise when they do not work for themselves? One may see the difference by comparing this boy here with his neighbours. Ned is a hard-working lad as can be, and gives no trouble."

Ned turned round on hearing this and made his bow. He smiled when the bailiff went on to say,

"He is not a parish boy, but was taken on against my wish because he wanted a living, and work, work, was all his cry. It was very well he came, for we find it does not always follow

that a great many labourers do a great deal of work. This lad does nearly as much as two parish boys, as I told them the other day; and I am sorry I did, as I fear it has made them plague him instead of mending themselves."

"I cannot see," said Dale, "what is to become of us farmers if these infernal rates are to go on swallowing up our substance, and putting us at the mercy of our own labourers. There is a piece of land of mine up yonder that I might make a pretty thing of; and I cannot touch it, because the tithe and the poor-rate together would just swallow up the whole profit."

"What a waste it is," rejoined the bailiff, "when a subsistence is wanted for so many!"

"And then I don't know that we gain anything by employing paupers and paying their wages out of the rates; for they just please themselves about working, and when they are paid, say to my face, 'No thanks: for you must pay us for doing nothing, if you did not for doing something.' I had words like that thrown in my teeth this very morning by a parish girl we have taken, and who seems to have learned her lesson wonderfully for the time she has been with us. Says she to my wife, 'What care I whether I stay or go? The parish is bound to find me.' It will be something more of a punishment soon, perhaps, to be sent away, for she seems to like keeping company with the farm-servants very well;—a flirting jade! with a face that is like to be the ruin of her."

Ned felt too sure that this must be Jane.

"I would pack her off before worse came of it," said the bailiff.

"I shall try her a little longer," said Dale: "there is no knowing whether one would change for the better. In my father's time, or at least in my grandfather's, a man might have his choice among independent labourers that had some regard to character, and looked to what they earned; but now the case is quite changed, except in the neighbourhood of flourishing large farms where the poor-rate is a very trifling concern. One may look round in vain for the cottagers one used to meet at every turn: they have mostly flocked to the towns, and are sent out to us again as pauper-labourers. There are more labourers than ever; more by far than we want; but they are labourers of a different and a much lower class."

"And the reason is evident enough," replied the bailiff. "Proprietors have suffered so much from the burden that is brought upon the land by cottagers' families, that they let no cottages be built that are not absolutely necessary. In towns, the burden is a very different thing, as land is divided into such small portions, and the houses built upon it let so high, that the increase of the rate does not balance the advantage; to say nothing of its being divided among so many. The consequence is that the overflow from the villages goes into the towns, and the people come out into the country for work. If it were not for the poor-rate, we should see in every parish many a rood tilled that now lies waste,

and many a row of cottages tenanted by those who now help to breed corruption in towns."

"And then," said Dale, "we might be free from the promises and cheats of overseers. God keep me from being uncharitable! but, upon my soul, I am sick of having to do with overseers. One undertakes to farm the poor; and then it would make any heart ache to see how they are treated, while he pockets every penny that can be saved out of their accommodation. Another begins making himself popular with pretending to reduce the rate; and then, the most respectable of the paupers pine at home without relief, while we are beset with beggars at every turn. The worst of all is such a man as our present overseer, who comes to taunt one with every increase of the rate, and to give hints how little scruple he should have in distraining for it. And this is the pass we shall all come to soon, unless I am much mistaken."

"As for beggars," replied the bailiff, "one would wonder where they come from. They swarm from all quarters like flies on the first summer day."

"One may see what brings them," said Dale, with a bitter laugh. "The flies come in swarms when there is a honey-pot near; and the beggars are brought by your master's charity purse. I reckon, from what I have seen here, that every blanket given away brings two naked people, and every bushel of coals a family that wants to be warmed."

The bailiff, instead of defending his master,

laughed significantly, and led the way onwards, leaving Ned to meditate with a heavy heart on as much as he understood of what they had been saying.

Chapter VII.

WHAT COMES OF PARISH CHARITIES.

It was not long before Ned accomplished an interview with his giddy sister, and bitterly was he disappointed at her appearing not altogether glad to see him. Each time that they conversed, she seemed more constrained, and insisted further on the danger of his being discovered and incurring the displeasure of the superiors of the workhouse. Ned would listen to no hints about going up the country or back into the town: he chose to remain where he could keep an eye on Jane, and where moreover his own labour supplied him with necessaries, and enabled him to lay by a few pence now and then. The first of these reasons for keeping his place was soon removed, to the dismay and grief of all connected with Jane.

After having tried in vain for a fortnight to catch a sight of her, and afflicted himself perpetually with the thought of her depression of spirits the last time they met, Ned took the

resolution of walking up to farmer Dale's door and asking to speak to Jane Bridgeman. The farmer happened to be within hearing, and came forward to give the answer.

"Bless me, is it you? After the character your master gave me of you, I should not have thought of finding you asking after Jane Bridgeman. But you are all alike, paupers or no paupers, as long as there are paupers among us to spread corruption. Off with you, if you want to find the person you ask for! She is not here, thank God! and never shall she enter these doors again. It was a great folly ever to take her in, only that another might have been as bad.—Where is she?—Nay; that is no concern of mine. I suppose she will lie in in the workhouse she came from; but whether she went straight there, or where she went, I neither know nor care. Off with you from my premises, if you please!"

And the farmer shut the door in Ned's face. His wife had more compassion. She saw Ned turn red and pale and look very wretched, and she knew him for the same lad who had many months before asked work in a tone that pleased her. She now went out at the back gate, and met him in the farm-yard. Ned at once owned, in answer to her enquiries, that Jane was his sister, and by this means learned much of her history. She had never settled well to her business from the day of her arrival, and had seemed far more bent on being admired than on discharging her duty. Her mistress was pleased

to observe, however, after a time, that she grew graver in her deportment, though she became more careless than ever about her work. It was true, she forgot everything that was said to her, and gave much trouble by her slovenliness; but she no longer smiled at compliments from the farm-servants, or acted the coquette in her necessary intercourse with them. Mrs. Dale thought her patience with the girl strangely rewarded when Jane came one day to give her warning that she wished to leave her present service at the earliest term. She would neither give a reason nor say where she meant to go. When the day arrived, she waited till her master went out, and then appeared, to bid her mistress farewell. In answer to repeated questions about where she was going, she at length sank down on a chair, sobbed convulsively, and owned that she had neither protection nor home in prospect; that she had been cruelly deceived, and that she meant to find some hiding-place where she might lie down and her shame die with her. It was some time before she would give any hint who it was that had deceived and who seduced her, and she never revealed his name; but Mrs. Dale believed it to be a pauper labourer who had disappeared a few days before, probably to avoid being obliged to marry Jane when their guilt should be discovered. On ascertaining that the girl had relations, Mrs. Dale recommended that she should go to her cousin Marshall, open her whole heart to her, and follow her advice as to what should next be done; but Jane's sobs be-

came more violent than ever at this suggestion. "They will tear me to pieces!" she cried. "They will never put up with disgrace; and I am the first that has disgraced them. I can never look cousin Marshall in the face again!"—Neither would she go to the workhouse. She loathed the idea of Mrs. Wilkes as much as she dreaded that of cousin Marshall; and Mrs. Dale was much perplexed, not daring to keep her another day, and not choosing to turn her out wholly destitute. After a long conversation, which served to soften the poor girl's heart and win her confidence, Mrs. Dale proposed a plan which was adopted,—that she should write a letter to cousin Marshall, urging that what was done could not be undone, and that the most likely way to make Jane's penitence real and lasting was to look to her present safety instead of driving her to desperation. Mrs. Dale expressed in very strong terms her concern that the respectability of the family should have been thus stained; and took the liberty of declaring her admiration of the parental kindness with which the poor orphans had been treated, and her earnest wishes that it might be better rewarded in the instance of the others than in that of poor Jane. With this letter in her hand, Jane was put into the carrier's cart, leaving as a last request to Ned that he would not follow her or give up his place on her account; and, partly for his sake, she promised that no persuasion should prevent her going straight to her cousin Marshall's and following the advice of her

friends in every particular. Mrs. Dale had since ascertained that she was received at her cousin's; and had remained in their house up to the last market-day, when the inquiry was made; but the farmer's wife did not know what sad circumstances the family were in when Jane arrived to add to their sorrow.

John Marshall had died after a few days' illness; and it was on the very night of his funeral that Jane alighted at his widow's door. Her first feeling on hearing of the event was joy that one person the less,—and he one whom she much respected,—would know of her disgrace. The next moment she felt what a wretch she must be,—what a state she must be reduced to,—to rejoice in the death of one who had been like a parent in tenderness, where no parental duty enjoined the acts of kindness he had done. She hastily bade Ann not tell her cousin of her arrival, and said she would beg a shelter for the night at her aunt Bell's; but she was told that aunt Bell was in great distress too, and could not possibly receive her; so there was no escape, and Jane was led in, trembling like a criminal under sentence, and pulling her cloak about her, to meet the kind-hearted cousin who had never frowned upon her. Her agitation was naturally misunderstood at first; but, after some time, her refusal even to look up, and the force with which she prevented their relieving her of her cloak made her cousin suspect the fact, and dismiss the young people, in order to arrive at an explanation.—She could not read the letter, and

Jane would not hear of Ann being called in to do it, but made an effort to get through it herself. Cousin Marshall said nothing for some time; not even the thought which was uppermost in her mind,—how glad she was that the fact never reached her husband's ear! At last, she merely assured Jane that she should be taken care of, and advised her to go to bed, and leave everything to be settled when there had been more time for thought.

"I cannot go," said Jane, "I will not leave you while you look so cold upon me, cousin."

"I will go with you, then," said Mrs. Marshall calmly. "We must have the same bed, and I am ready."

"You said you forgave me," cried the weeping Jane; "and I am sure this is not forgiving me. I never saw you look so upon anybody!"

"I never had reason, Jane; nobody belonging to me ever had to make such a confession as yours to-night. I pity you enough, God knows! for you must be very miserable; but I cannot look upon you as I do upon your innocent sisters; how should I?—Poor Sally! I remember her great comfort about being blind was that it was not Ann; and if you have any comfort at all, I suppose it must be that."

"Indeed, indeed, I had rather be anybody than what I am. I had rather be drowning this minute, or even on the gallows: I had rather die any how than be as I am. I hope I shall die when my time comes."

Cousin Marshall quietly represented the sin-

fulness of this thought, and Jane tempted her to say more and more, being able to bear anything better than the silence of displeasure. What, her cousin asked, could bring her to this pass? What madness could make her plunge herself into this abyss of distress after all the warning and watching, all the——But it was foolish to say more, Mrs. Marshall continued, when she might be led to say what would do no good and would be therefore unkind.

Jane would not let it drop. She laid much of the blame on the workhouse, where it was a common boast among the women how early they had got married, being so far better off than honester people that they need not trouble themselves about what became of themselves and their children, since the parish was bound to find them. It was considered a kind of enterprise among the paupers to cheat their superiors, and to get the girls early married by rendering marriage desirable on the score of decency, and of the chance of a man being able to support his children hereafter. Jane's leading idea was the glory of getting married at sixteen; and the last thing she thought of was the possibility of being deceived; and now that her intended husband was gone nobody knew whither, she was as much astonished and terrified at her own position as any of her friends could be. This explanation caused some inward relentings towards her; but cousin Marshall thought it too early yet to show them, and to avoid the danger of doing so, insisted on both going to bed, where neither of

them slept a wink or exchanged a word during the whole night.

Before morning, Mrs. Marshall had arranged her plan. Jane's arrival was on no account to be mentioned, and she was to be kept entirely out of sight for the three months which were to pass before her confinement. By these means, the persecution of parish officers might be avoided, and an opportunity afforded for observing whether the shock had really so sobered Jane as to render her more fit to take care of herself than she was before. If she appeared truly penitent, Mrs. Marshall would try to obtain a service for her at some distance, where her disgrace would not follow her, and would also take charge of the infant, with such help as Jane could spare out of her wages; and then the parish need never know anything about the matter. Jane was most happy to agree to these terms, and settled herself in this bedroom for three long months, intending to work diligently for her infant, and to take all the needle-work of the family off her cousin's hands, with as much of the charge of the children as was possible within so confined a space. What more she wanted of exercise was to be taken with Mrs. Marshall very early in these spring mornings, before their neighbours should be stirring. The young people were so trained to obedience, that there was no fear of their telling anything that they were desired to keep to themselves.

Things went on as quietly as could be looked for in such unhappy circumstances. No difficul-

ties arose for some time, and Jane had only to struggle with her inward shame, her grief at witnessing Ann's sorrow, her terror at the risks which must be daily run, and her inability to get rest of body or mind. She could scarcely be persuaded to come down in the evening when the door was shut and the window curtain drawn: she started at every noise, and could not get rid of a vague expectation that her lover would find her out and come to comfort her;—an expectation which made her turn pale whenever she heard a man's voice under the window, or a tap at the door below. Besides these fears, circumstances happened now and then to try her to the utmost.

Early one morning, before Jane was up, and while Mrs. Marshall and her young people were dressing, a step was heard slowly ascending the stairs, the door opened, and Sally appeared with a smiling countenance and the question,

"Are you awake yet, cousin Marshall, and all of you?"

Mrs. Marshall made a sign to the children by putting her finger on her lip, and pointing to Jane. She had no intention that Sally should be made unhappy by knowing the truth at present, and was besides afraid to trust her with such a secret among her companions at the Asylum, who were all accustomed to have no concealments from one another.

"Why don't you answer?" said Sally, groping for the bed. "I do believe you are all asleep, though I thought I heard you moving, and the door was on the latch below."

"We are all awake, my dear, and one or two gone out; but we are surprised to see you so early. What brings you at such a time, and who came with you?"

Sally explained that the ward of the Asylum in which she worked was to be whitewashed this day; and she and a few others whose friends lived near had leave to enjoy a long holiday. Three of them had taken care of one another, the streets being clear at this hour; and she had found her way easily for the short distance she had to come alone. While she spoke, Jane was gazing at her, tearful, and longing to throw herself on her sister's neck. The temptation became almost irresistible when Sally, feeling for a place on which to sit down, moved herself within reach.

"Take care where you sit, my dear," said Mrs. Marshall. "Here, I will give you a seat on my chest."

This chest was directly opposite the bed, so that Jane could see the face under the black bonnet, and convince herself that the old womanish little figure in brown stuff gown and white kerchief was really the sister Sally she had last seen in blue frock and pinafore. During the whole day, Jane sat on the stairs behind the half-shut door, listening to Sally's cheerful tales about the doings at the Asylum, and to her frequent inquiries about both her sisters, and trembling when any of the little ones spoke, lest they should reveal her presence. Many perplexing and dangerous questions too were asked.

"Which of you sighs so? I should not ask if it could be you, cousin; but it comes from the other side."

Again, when Jane's dinner was being carried to her.

"Ah, we are not allowed to move at dinner-time, happen what will: and you used not to let us either; and now Ann has gone upstairs twice since we sat down." Again,

"I have leave to knit what I please on Saturdays; so I am knitting a pair of mittens for Jane, against she comes to see me, which I hope she will one day; but be sure you none of you tell her about the mittens. I spoiled two pair in trying, and she would be so sorry to know how I wasted my time and the cotton."

"Poor dear!" said Mrs. Marshall at night, when Sally was gone; "it seems wicked to take advantage of her infirmity to deceive her; but it is all for her good, placed where she is by her blindness. It would be far more cruel to tell her all, when it may be that she need never know it."

Jane took all this upon herself; but, while she blamed herself for having caused this new practice of concealment, she was far more grieved at it in John Marshall's case. She did not strictly owe any confidence to Sally, but she did to John Marshall; and the idea that he had left her the same blessing with the rest of her family when he died, gave her far more pain than any tears or reproaches from Sally could ever do.

One Sunday, when cousin Marshall had gone

to church in the morning with her family, and left her house apparently shut up, as usual; and when, moreover, it was so fine a day as to have taken almost all the neighbours from their homes, Jane came down to prepare the dinner, feeling quite secure from interruption. She was standing kneading the dumplings, when a noise was heard outside, and she had but a moment's time to escape upstairs before her aunt Bell lifted the latch and entered. Seeing the dough on the board and nobody there to knead it, she naturally proceeded to the bedroom, where she found Jane on the bed with coverings thrown over her. Questions and explanations followed.—How long had Jane been unwell, and did she expect to go back to her place when recovered? Why did she not let her aunt know of her arrival? though, to be sure, there was no use in expecting help from her, distressed as she was. Jane was really glad to turn the conversation away from her own troubles to those of Mrs. Bell, who was, as she herself said, as good as a widow, her husband having absconded. Dear! had not Jane heard of it? He had been advertised by the overseers in the newspapers, and a great fuss had been made about it; but, for her part, she was convinced it was the best thing he could do for her and the children, to go and find a settlement in a distant parish, leaving his family to be provided for by his own. Where had he gone?—Why, supposing she knew, was it likely she should tell before the year was out? However, he had made all safe by not giving a hint in

which direction he should travel. Jane asked what was the necessity of keeping the secret for a year? He would surely be out of reach before the year was over, if at all. Mrs. Bell laughed and said she saw Jane did not know how to get a settlement; and explained to her that her husband's aim was to obtain a claim on a distant and prosperous parish, which must be done either by living forty days on an estate of his own, worth thirty pounds, or in a rented tenement of the yearly value of ten pounds, or by serving an apprenticeship, or by going through a year's service on a yearly hiring as an unmarried man. This last was, of course, the only means within his power; and to make sure of it, it was his part to keep to himself whence he had come, and that he had a wife and family; and her's to remain ignorant whither he had gone, and not to inquire for her husband for a year at least.

"Do you call this a cheat, my dear?" she went on. "Lord! what a tender conscience you have! It is no worse than what is done every day. Would you think it such a very wicked thing now,—suppose a young creature like you should have happened to have a misfortune, and should wish her infant to have a settlement in a particular parish,—would you think it such a very wicked thing to hide yourself and keep your condition a secret from the officers till your child was born?" And Mrs. Bell looked inquisitively in her niece's face.

"That would be telling no lie," replied Jane, her face making the confession which she kept her tongue from uttering.

"Well; and whose fault is it, my dear, that lies are told about the matter? If the laws put such difficulty in the day of getting relief, we are driven to tell fibs; for relief we must have."

Mrs. Marshall, who had overheard some of the conversation, and now came to Jane's assistance, observed that the fault seemed to her to be in the laws giving relief at all. Mischiefs out of number came of it, and no good that she saw. The more relief the law gave, the more it might give, to judge by the swarms of paupers; and all this made it the more difficult for honest and independent folks to get their bread. She thought her own experience, and Mrs. Bell's together, might be enough to show how bad the system was.

"Mine, I grant you," cried Mrs. Bell; "but what have you had to do with it? You, that pride yourself on never having touched a penny of parish money."

"Thanks, under God, to my husband, cousin Bell, we have been beholden to nobody but ourselves for our living. We have never had to bear the scornful glance from the rate-payers, nor the caprice of the overseer, nor any of the uncertainty of depending on what might fail us, nor the shame of calling our children paupers.—I say these things freely, cousin Bell, because I know you have been too long used to them to mind them.—We have never crossed the threshold of the workhouse on our own account; nor ever been driven to expose our want when it was the greatest; or tempted to fib by word

or act to get more than our share of other people's money. Yet, the worst things we have suffered have arisen out of these poor laws; and the worst thing about them is, that those suffer by them who desire to have nothing to do with them. They prevent people going where their labour is wanted, and would be well paid, and keep them in a place where there are far more hands than there is work for. Honest, hard-working men, like my husband, have always felt the hardship of either being obliged to stay where wages were low from the number of labourers, or to give up their settlements for the chance of work in some other place."

"He had better have run off by himself, and left his settlement to you and the children," observed Mrs. Bell.

"John Marshall was not the man to do that, cousin. But, as I was saying, many a time when we were brought very low, so much so that my husband had not had his pint, nor the children anything but bread for a week, and less of that than they could have eaten,—at many such times we have been told of this parish and that parish where there was plenty of work and good wages, and have had half a mind to go and try our fortune; but we always remembered that so many more needy people would be likely to do the same, that it would soon cease to be a good parish, and we might have left a place where we were known and respected, for what would prove to be no good. I have heard that these favourite parishes are seldom long pros-

perous under the best management, for paupers contrive, by all sorts of tricks, to get a settlement in them."

"Well; that makes an end, however, of your complaint of there not being labour where labour is wanted."

"Indeed it does not, cousin Bell; for they are mostly idle men and cheats that wander about making experiments on such places. Sober, good labourers, would be much more ready to go where they are wanted, if it were not for the fear of losing their settlements. Such end, as my husband did, by staying in their own parish to have their labour poorly paid, and to see rogues and vagabonds consuming what would have added to their wages, if labour had been left to earn its due reward."

Mrs. Bell did not care about all this; all she knew was that people must live, and that she and her family could not have lived without the parish, and a deal of help besides.

"The very thing I complain of most, cousin Bell, is, that those who have the relief are those that know and care the least about the matter. It is they that are above taking the relief that have good reason to know, and much cause to care, that their labour cannot be properly paid, and that their children cannot have a fair chance in the world, while the money that should pay their wages is spent without bringing any more gain than if it was thrown into the sea. It is because such as you, cousin Bell, care about nothing but getting relief, that such husbands as

mine lose their natural rest through anxiety, and pinch themselves and work themselves into their graves, and die, not knowing but their families may come to be paupers after all.—I am warm, cousin, but you'll excuse me; nothing chafes me so easily as thinking of this; the more from remembering nearly the last words my husband spoke. 'I hope,' says he,—but I thought there was little hope in his tone, or in his face,—'I hope you and yours will be able to keep free of the parish. Get the boys into my club, if they live to be old enough; and then they will keep their mother and sisters free of the parish.'—I thank God! we can get on at present; but I sometimes think some of us will end our days in the workhouse, if idle and needy people go on to increase as they do, and to eat up the substance they never helped, as we have done, to make."

"It will be some time yet, cousin Marshall, before your boys can belong to the club."

"Yes; but in the meanwhile there is the Savings Bank, where the girls can put their little savings as well as the boys. Not that they have done anything in that way yet, except my eldest and Ann. But the others are earning their own clothes."

Mrs. Bell asked Jane whether it was not a nice thing for her sister Ann to have a little money in the bank ready for such occasions as Jane's present illness? She supposed Jane was now using it up; and to be sure it was a charming thing to have such help at hand. Mrs. Marshall, who knew that one of Jane's griefs was

depriving Ann of her little store, saved her the pain of replying by inviting Mrs. Bell down to dinner.

At the close of the meal, Mrs. Bell cast a longing eye on the few fragments she had left. Her children had only a crust of bread to eat this day; and she complained much of the hardships they were reduced to, showing how her only gown was wearing out, and relating that it was ruinous work to do as she was doing now, pawning her blanket in the morning to release her gown, and the gown in the evening to release the blanket. Cousin Marshall was grieved for the children, but, charitable as she was known to be, she offered no help. She had nothing to spare, and had done her utmost in giving a hearty dinner; and, if she had had the means, she would have bestowed them where they might have afforded real relief, which no charity ever did to Mrs. Bell.

This woman seldom visited her neighbours without leaving them cause to wish that she had stayed way. This was the case in the present instance. She whispered her suspicions of Jane's situation, either to the parish officers, or to some one who carried it round to them; and the consequence was that the poor girl was hunted up, taken before a magistrate to be sworn, and removed to the workhouse to abide her confinement. In return to her bitter reproaches the next time they met, Mrs. Bell laughed, and said she thought she had done them all a great kindness.—Cousin Marshall ought to be very

glad to be relieved of the charge, and Jane would be sure of a husband if her lover could be found up. Jane's views had, however, been altered by her intercourse with Mrs. Marshall. She would much rather have gone to service and tried to atone for what was done, than remain to be the pauper-wife of a man who had cruelly deceived her,—who would not marry unless he could be caught,—and who, being an unwilling, would be probably an unkind, husband. Her good cousin feared something worse for her than the misery of her lot: she feared that this misery might drive her to habitual vice; and that her re-entrance into the workhouse might prove the date from which she would become a castaway from her family for ever.

Chapter VIII.

WHAT IS CHARITY?

Ned heard of Jane's return to the workhouse, and of her confinement, from Mr. Burke, who attended Mr. Effingham's family, and who recognized, to his great surprise, Ned Bridgeman in the boy who one day opened the gate for him, and followed to hold his horse. Whenever he came, from that time forward, he inquired for Ned, and was ready to make the wished-for reply to the customary petition, not to tell the officers or

anybody belonging to them, where he was, but just to inform cousin Marshall and his sisters that he was well, and likely to go on earning a living. It was in vain to reason with him, that the parish could desire nothing more than that he should maintain himself, and that the officers would be glad to leave him unmolested. He had eloped, and was possessed with the idea that he should be carried back whence he came; and had, moreover, such a horror of the place and people connected with his short period of pauperism, that he longed above all things to keep out of sight of the one, and be forgotten by the other. The pauper labourers who worked with him in the field, discovered something of this, and amused themselves by alarming him with dark hints, from time to time, that some danger impended. They were not over-fond of him, harmless and good-natured as he was. The bailiff was apt to hold him up as an example to them in an injudicious way, and Ned's horror of pauperism,—his pride, as his companions called it,—was not exactly the quality to secure their good fellowship. They teased the boy sadly, and Mr. Burke thought he looked more and more grave every time he saw him. The gentleman was not, therefore, much surprised when he was told one day that Ned was missing, nor did he give much heed to the remarks on the unsteadiness of the boy who had twice absconded. On finding that, so far from having done anything dishonest, Ned had left nearly half-a-crown of his savings in Mr. Effingham's hands, Mr.

Burke made inquiry into the circumstances, and found that, as he suspected, Ned had been assured that the officers were after him, and so cruelly taunted with his sister's shame, that it was no wonder he had gone farther up the country, where he might work in peace, if work was to be found. Nothing could be done but to take charge of his money, and invest it where it might increase till the owner should be forthcoming to claim it. So Mr. Burke pocketed the two shillings and fourpence half-penny as carefully as if it had been a hundred pounds, and saw that it was placed in the Savings Bank with Ann's, and made as light as he could to the family of the fact that he no longer knew where the lad was; adding that Ned was a boy whom he would trust all over the world by himself, and prophesying that he would re-appear some day to be a credit and a help to his orphan sisters.

On one occasion when Mr. Burke was entering the village of Titford, he overtook Mr. Effingham walking slowly with his head bent down, and his hands in his pockets. He looked up when greeted by his friend, who accosted him with—

"I am afraid you are to be one of my patients to-day, to judge by your gait and countenance. What can be the matter? No misfortune at home, I hope?"

"No; but I have just heard something that has shocked me very much. There is an execution at Dale's."

"How hard that poor man has struggled!"

observed Mr. Burke. "And has it even come to this at last?"

"Even so; and through no fault of his own that I can see. They are distraining for the rate."

"Ay, that is the way, Effingham. Thus is our pauper list swelled, year by year. It grows at both ends. Paupers multiply their own numbers as fast as they can, and rate-payers sink down into rate-receivers. This will probably be Dale's fate, as it has been that of many little farmers before him. And if it is, he will only anticipate by a few years the fate of others besides small farmers, of shopkeepers, manufacturers, merchants, and agriculturists of every class; always providing that some radical amendment of the system does not take place."

"God help us!" cried Effingham. "If so, our security is gone, as a nation, and as individuals."

"At present, Effingham, the security of property is to the pauper, and not to the proprietor, however rich he may be. The proprietor is compelled, as in the case before us, to pay more and more to the rate till his profits are absorbed, and he is obliged to relinquish his undertakings one after another; field after field goes out of cultivation, his capital is gradually transferred to his wages-fund, which is paid away without bringing an adequate return; and when all but his fixed capital is gone, that becomes liable to seizure, and the ruin is complete. There is no more security of property, under such a system,

than there is security of life to a poor wretch in a quicksand, who feels himself swallowed up inch by inch. The paupers meanwhile are sure of their relief as long as the law subsists. They are to be provided for at all events, let what will become of other people. While Dale has been fretting by day, and tossing by night under the burden of his cares, his pauper labourers have been supporting a very different kind of burden, —the burden of the pauper song,

> 'Hang sorrow and cast away care,
> The parish is bound to find us!'"

"This very security of property, which is the most precious of an independent man's rights," said Effingham, "seems to be the most pernicious thing in the world to the indigent. One may fairly call it so in relation to them, for they seem to consider the produce of the rate as their property."

"It is really so," replied Burke. "They know it to be the lawful property of the pauper body, and that the only question is how it is to be distributed? As long as they know this, they will go on multiplying the claims upon it till nothing is left with which to satisfy them."

"It is very odd," said Effingham, "that none of the checks that have ever been tried have done any good; they seem rather to have made the matter worse."

"I do not think it strange, Effingham. None of the remedies have struck at the root of the evil, and none could therefore effect lasting good. The test is just this: do they tend to lessen the

number of the indigent? Unless they do this, they may afford relief to a generation, or shift a burden from one district to another, or from one class of producers upon another; but they will not improve the system. Look at the experiments tried! First, paupers were to wear a badge, a mark of infamy. Of course, the profligate and hardened were the readiest to put it on, and those who had modesty and humble pride refused it, and obtained help only through the compassion of overseers, who evaded the regulation so perpetually, that it was abolished as useless. While it lasted, profligate pauperism increased very rapidly. Next came the expedient of workhouses, in which the poor were expected to do more work, and be fed less expensively, than in their own houses. But here again the rogue and vagabond class reaped the advantage, the houses being detested by the sober and quiet; and the choice of the latter to pine at home, rather than be shut up in a workhouse, occasioned a diminution of the rate for some time; but that time has long been over, and now the maintenance of a pauper costs three or four times as much in a workhouse as out of it, there being no inducement to the paupers to work, and but little to their managers to economise. And this is just what any one might have foretold from the beginning, if he had seen what experience has plainly taught us, that indigence must spread while numbers increase, and while the subsistence-fund, on which they are to be supported, is consumed unproductively."

"But why unproductively?" said Effingham. "I cannot help thinking that there must be some mode of management, by which manufactures might be carried on by paupers with pretty good success."

"Suppose it to be so, according to what I imagine you to mean by success,—suppose a certain quantity of produce to be achieved and disposed of,—this is in itself a great evil. Capital raised by forcible means, arbitrarily applied, and made to bring a return from an artificial market, can never be so productive as if it found a natural channel; and its employment in this artificial manner is a serious injury to individual capitalists. In the neighbourhood of a workhouse where work is really done a manufacturer, while paying to the rate, bitterly feels that he is subscribing the means by which his trade is to be stolen from him. It is adding insult to injury to set up in the faces of rate-payers workhouse manufactures, which are to have a preference in the market to their own, In all these cases, however, the object fails. To all remedies yet tried, the same fundamental objection applies: they all encourage the increase of population, while they sink capital. What we want is the very reverse of this,—we want a reproduction of capital with increase, and a limitation of numbers within a due proportion to this fund."

"What do you think, then, of the methods proposed for the amelioration of the system?"

"Which? There are so many."

"The cottage system, for one."

"It will not bear the test. Under no system does population increase more rapidly;—witness Ireland; and in addition to the worst evils that afflict Ireland, we should have that of a legal claim to support, which effectually prevents the due improvement of capital. Cottages would prove no better than workhouses, depend upon it."

"Well, then, what do you think of assessing new kinds of property?"

"Worse and worse! This would be only casting more of our substance into the gulf before its time. It would be helping to increase the number of paupers; it would be encouraging the unproductive consumption of capital; it would be——"

"Like pouring water into one of your dropsical patients," said Effingham, smiling.

"Just so, Effingham; and it needs no great skill to foresee the result in both cases."

"Then there are Benefit Clubs," replied Effingham. "Some think that if they were made obligatory by law, they might soon supersede the poor-rate. What do you think of them?"

"No man approves such societies more than I, as long as they are voluntary; but fellowship of this kind would lose its virtue, I doubt, by being made compulsory. There are no means that I know of, of compelling a man who will not earn to store his earnings; and the frugal and industrious will do it without compulsion, as soon as they understand the matter: so that in fact the worst classes of society would be left as free to

roam, and beg, and steal, as if the institution did not exist."

"But Friendly Societies and Benefit Clubs will bear your test. They tend to the increase of capital, and, by encouraging prudence, to the limitation of numbers."

"True; and therefore I wish they were in universal operation among the working classes; but this must be by voluntary association. It will be a work of time to convince our whole population of their advantages; and even then the less industrious part will rather depend on the poor rate, if it still subsists. We must have recourse to some speedier method of lessening our burdens, giving all possible encouragement to Friendly Societies in the mean time."

"What method? It seems to me that relief is already given in every possible way."

"Ay; there is the mistake, Effingham. People think they give relief in giving money."

"I seldom give money," replied Effingham.

"No; but you give what money will buy, which is, begging your pardon, worse than ineffectual. Now, if you have no objection, I should like to know how much you spent on coals and blankets the first Christmas you settled here, and how much last year?"

"I began with devoting five pounds a year to this purpose; but it increased sadly. I stopped short two years ago at twenty pounds; but it grieved me to the heart to do so, for more objects remain now unsupplied than I supplied at first."

"Probably; and are these new applicants strangers from other parishes brought round you by your bounty, or are more of your near neighbours in a condition for receiving charity?"

"Dale reproaches me with having brought an inundation of paupers from a distance; but really our own population has increased wonderfully."

"And the more support you offer them, friend, the more surprisingly they will increase, if there can be anything surprising in the case. Surely you do not mean to go on giving coals and blankets?"

"What can I do? You would call me cruel to withdraw the gift, if you could see the destitution of the poor creatures. I am completely at a loss how to proceed. If I go on, poverty increases; if I stop, the people will freeze and pine before my eyes. What a dilemma!"

"Much like that of government about its pauper subjects. I should recommend the same method to both."

"To fix a maximum, I suppose; to declare the amount beyond which relief shall not be given? I have tried that, and it does not succeed. Twenty pounds a year is my maximum, and is known to be so; but every one hopes to have a portion of it, and reckons upon his share nearly as confidently as if all were sure of it."

"Of course; and there is the additional evil of admitting the principle of a claim to support, which is at the bottom of the mischief.—No; to fix a maximum is to unite the evils of the maintenance and the abolition of the pauper system; and both are bad enough singly. If I

were you, and if I were the government, I would immediately disavow the principle in question, and take measures for ceasing to act upon it. If I were you, I would explain to my neighbours that, finding this mode of charity create more misery than it relieves, I should discontinue it in the way which appears to inflict the least hardship. I would give notice that, after the next Christmas donation, no more coals and blankets shall be given except to those aged and sickly people who at present look for them; and that no new applicants whatever shall be placed on the list, the object being to have the charity die out as soon as possible."

"But I shall be railed at wherever I turn my face. I should not wonder if they pull my house about my ears. They will rob my poultry-yard, and burn my ricks. They will——"

"Very like the situation of government!" exclaimed Mr. Burke. "The very same difficulties on a smaller scale. Friend, you must bear the railing for a time, since it comes as a natural consequence of what you have already done. I am sure so benevolent a man as you would rather endure this personal inconvenience than add to the misery around you. You are capable of heroism in retrieving a mistake, Effingham. As for your house and other property, you must take measures to protect it. You must firmly and gently repress tendencies to violence which arise, as you now perceive, from an error of your own."

"I will consider, resolve, and act; and that

without delay, for the evil is pressing," said Effingham.

"I wish government would do the same," replied Mr. Burke. "We hear much of consideration, but the resolve is yet to be made; and how long the act may be in following, it is impossible to guess. Meanwhile, we are going headlong to ruin as fast as you would do if you answered all the petitions for charity which would be brought upon you by unbounded readiness to give. Your private fortune would be gone in a twinkling, and so will vanish our national resources."

"What period would you fix for abolishing the rate?"

"The best plan, in my opinion, yet proposed, is this:—to enact that no child born from any marriage taking place within a year from the date of the law, and no illegitimate child born within two years from the same date, shall ever be entitled to parish assistance. This regulation should be made known, and its purpose explained universally; and this, if properly done, might, I think, prevent violence, and save a vast amount of future distress. The people should be called together, either in their places of worship or elsewhere, in such a manner as to attract the whole population to listen, and the case should be explained to them by their pastors or others. It is so plain a case, and so capable of illustration, that I see no great difficulty in making the most ignorant comprehend it."

"And yet the details are vast."

"Vast, but not complicated; so the whole might be conveyed in a parable which any child can understand. I think I dare undertake to prove to any rational being that national distress *cannot* be relieved by money, and that consequently individual distress cannot be so relieved without inflicting the same portion of distress elsewhere. A child can see that if there is so much bread in a country and no more, and if the rich give some of the poor two shillings a day that they may eat more bread, the price of bread will rise, and some who could buy before must go without now. Since no more bread is created by this charity, the only thing done is to take some of it out of the reach of purchasers to give it to paupers."

"True: the only real charity is to create more bread; and, till this can be done, to teach men to be frugal of what they have.—I happen to know a case which illustrates your doctrine. Owen, who lives in this village, earned ten shillings a week before the last scarcity. He bought eight shillings' worth of flour for his family, and had two to spare for other necessaries. During the scarcity he received fourteen shillings a week from his parish, in addition to the ten he earned; but the price of corn had risen so much that he now gave twenty-two shillings out of his twenty-four for the same quantity of flour; so that he had still two shillings left for other necessaries; and thus was no richer with twenty-four shillings than he had been with ten."

"If there had been many such cases," observed Mr. Burke, "the price of corn would have been even higher than it was. The best charity to the public as well as to this man would have been to teach him that he had better look after other kinds of food, and not insist on such an abundance of flour. Do not you think he could have understood this? and if he could, why should not his brethren understand the state of the pauper system, and be brought to acquiesce in the measures now necessary to be taken?—If the regulation I have described had been made when first proposed, there would have been much less difficulty than now. If not done now, there is no saying how soon it may be out of our power to do anything. We are now borne down, we shall soon be crushed, by the weight of our burdens."

"We must hasten to give our testimony," said Effingham: "I, by withdrawing my donations, and declaring why; you, by——but you have given yours, I suspect. I see now the reasons of your resigning your offices at both the charitable institutions where I and others took so much pains to get you in. I was more than half angry at it when I thought of our canvass, and all the disagreeablenesses belonging to it;—and all done and endured for nothing. But I see now how it is. I can only hope that your going out of office may do more good than your going in; and what more can I say?"

"Nothing more gratifying to my self-complacency, I am sure," said Mr. Burke, smiling,

"I have had my recompense already in finding that many more than I expected attend to my reasons, and take them into consideration as a matter of real importance. My hopes sometimes mount so high as to flatter me that all Great Britain may soon be effectually employed upon the problem—How to reduce the number of the indigent."

Chapter IX.

COUSIN MARSHALL'S END.

It was some years before any tidings came of Ned that could be depended upon. At length a countryman called on the widow Marshall one market-day, saying that he had had a world of trouble in finding her out in the small place she had got into outside the city, but was determined not to meet Ned Bridgeman again without having seen her and delivered Ned's packet into her own hand. Mrs. Marshall had nobody living with her now but her youngest daughter, who happened not to be at home at this hour; and as Mrs. Marshall could not read, she was obliged to wait till evening to know what was in the letter, and what the guinea was for which the packet contained. She obtained great satisfaction from the countrymen concerning Ned, sent him her love and blessing, and the promise

of an answer to his letter when there should be an opportunity of sending one, which might happen by means of the present messenger within six months. Many times before the evening did cousin Marshall open the letter, and examine it, and admire as much of it as was apparent to her; viz. the evenness of the lines and the absence of blots. The guinea, too, was a very good sign. The letter proved that his workhouse schooling had not been lost upon him; and the money, that her methods of education had taken effect. Her answer, written down by her daughter, was as follows:—

"Dear Ned,

"Your letter was very welcome to us, since you could not come yourself. I do not wonder you met with hardships and difficulty in settling. Such is the way with many people in these days who wish to be beholden to nobody; but such generally meet with their deserts at last, as I am glad to hear you have. We have put your guinea into the Savings Bank for you, my dear boy, as, thank God! we none of us want it at present, and there was half-a-guinea of yours there before. Now I dare say you are wondering how it came there? It is the half-crown of wages you left behind you at Titford that Mr. Burke took care of, and it has grown into half-a-guinea by not being touched, which I hope will be good news to you. I quite approve your wish about the Friendly Society, knowing how my husband did the wisest thing in belonging to

one, and at times could have got through in no other way. There is nothing about your sisters that should give you any scruple. Sally, poor thing, is very contented in the Asylum; and, as the people there are fond of her, has fewer troubles than many that have their eyesight. I have not seen so many tears from her since she went in as when my Susan read your letter to her, and she sends you her love. Ann is pretty well off in service, having nothing to complain of but her mistress's temper, with which she will contrive to bear, I hope, for she has a sweet one of her own. She will write to you herself, and tell you as much as we know about Jane, which is but little, and that little very sad. She is quite lost, I fear; but you may depend on my keeping my eye upon her. I thank you, my dear boy, for your questions about me and mine. My children have all left me but the one that holds the pen, and she is going to marry too. I hope she will have an easier life than her sisters, who are much put to it with their large families. I begin to feel myself growing old when I see so many grandchildren about me; and perhaps it is owing to that that I feel far more troubled about how their parents are to get through than I ever did for John Marshall and myself, when we had another little family added, as it were, to our own eight. But God preserve me from failing in my trust!—trusting as I wish to do, not to other people's charity, but to one's own labour and thrift, which has His blessing sooner than the other. Many a merciful lesson

has been given me about trusting,—one since I had your letter. On Saturday, my eldest grandson and daughter were both out of work. To-day is Monday, and they have each got a place. Indeed God Almighty is very good to us. But Susan is tired, not having kept up her schooling, I am afraid, so well as you. However, it looks a long letter, though I have many more things to say to you if you were here. Old as I call myself, I may see you on this side the grave, or will try to think so till you say not. Till then, I send you my love and blessing, which I hope you know you have had all this long while."

The close of cousin Marshall's very long life was not altogether so serene as the character of its days of vigour might seem to deserve. Her children were so burdened with families of their own that they could offer no further assistance than that she should lodge with them by turns. She was positive, however, in her determination to live alone; and a small room in a poor place on the outskirts of the city was her dwelling. In one way or another she earned a little matter, and lived upon it, to the astonishment of some who received twice as much from the parish and could not make it do. Her adopted children found the utmost difficulty in making her accept any assistance, clearly as it was her due from those to whom she had been a mother in their orphan state. It grieved Ned to the heart to see her using her dim sight to patch her cloak for the twentieth time, when he had placed at her

disposal the guinea and half, with all that had accumulated upon it, in the Savings Bank.

"Not yet. When I want it. I can do for myself still," were always her answers; and though, without consulting her, he laid in coals and bought clothes for her during the two only visits that he was able to make to that neighbourhood, and though these presents were, after some scruple, accepted, he never could prevail upon her to use the little fund during his absence for her daily comforts. She was somewhat unpopular among her neighbours, who did not relish her occasional observations on the multiplication of alehouses, or her reports of what a comely, robust man her John Marshall was, for all he had seldom a pint and pipe to refresh himself with when his day's work was done. Nobody was more openhearted and sociable; but he could not afford both ale and independence,—to say nothing of charity; and everybody knew he was a father to the orphan.—The neighbours observed that he was certainly very kind to the parish; but that, for their parts, they could not afford to give charity to the parish. It was more natural for the parish to give to them. Such degeneracy as this roused cousin Marshall to prophesy evil. She was rather too ready with her forebodings that those who thus spoke would die in the workhouse, and with her horror at the warning seeming to create no alarm. But what roused her indignation above everything was the frequent question how, after all her toils and savings, she was better off than her cousin, Mrs.

Bell? Mrs. Bell had never more heard of her husband, and had at length been taken into the workhouse with her family; of whom one daughter had followed Jane's example, and gained her point of a pauper marriage; one son was an ill-doing pauper-labourer; and another, having been transported for theft, was flourishing at Sydney, and likely to get more money than all cousin Marshall's honest children put together. Mrs. Bell was proud of this son's prosperity, and would not have been sorry to hear any day of the other getting transported in like manner. —Now and then it occurred to cousin Marshall that there was little use in answering those who could ask such a question as wherein she was better off than Mrs. Bell; but it oftener happened that her replies were given in a style of eloquence that did not increase her popularity.—Death came at last, in time to save her from the dependence she dreaded, though not from the apprehension of it. In crossing her threshold, one winter's day, with her apron full of sticks, she tripped and fell. She seemed to sustain no injury but the jar; but that was fatal. She survived just long enough to see the daughter who lived in the neighbourhood, and make a bequest of her Bible to one child, her bed to another, her few poor clothes to a third, pointing out the corner of her chest where was deposited the little hoard she had saved for her burial.

"God has been very good to me and mine," she said. "They tell me I have not always said so; but I meant no mistrust. I may have

been too much in a hurry to go where 'the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest:' but it is all right now that I am really going at last. Thank God! I can say to the last that He has been very good to me."

She left her blessing for every one by name, and died.

Mr. Burke met the funeral train coming out of the churchyard, and immediately knew Ned, long as it was since they had met.

"Your cousin Marshall's funeral!" he exclaimed. "My wife and Louisa and I inquired for her in vain, a long while ago, and supposed she had been dead some time. She must have been a great age."

"Eighty-one, sir."

In answer to Mr. Burke's inquiries how she had passed her latter days, and in opposition to Ned's affectionate report of her, a neighbour observed, with a shake of the head, that she was awfully forsaken at times.

"It was but the day before she died, sir, that she complained that the Almighty had forgotten her, and that she was tired of looking to be released."

Ned brushed his hand across his eyes as he observed that her neighbours were not capable of judging of such a woman as cousin Marshall, and not worthy to find fault with what she let fall in her dark moments.

"My wife said at the time, however," replied the man, "that it would be well if a judgment did not come upon her for such words; and,

sure enough, by the same hour the next day she was dead; and not in a natural way either."

Mr. Burke smiled at Ned, who gravely observed that his cousin had lived too late to be done justice to. By what he had heard her tell, he judged that a hundred years ago she would have been honoured and tended in her old age, and saved all she had suffered from fear of the parish, and have had it told on her tombstone how many children she had bred up by her industry. It would not be difficult, for that matter, to put up a tombstone now; but where would be the use of it, unless it was honored? The want lay there.

"I hope," said Mr. Burke, "that we may as reasonably say that your cousin lived too early as that she lived too late. The time will come, trust me, when there will be end of the system under which she has suffered. It cannot always be that the law will snatch the bread from the industrious to give it to the idle, and turn labour from its natural channel, and defraud it of its due reward, and authorise the selfish and dissolute to mock at those who prize independence, and who bind themselves to self-denial that they may practise charity. The time will come, depend upon it, when the nation will effectually take to heart such injustice as this. There is much to undo, much to rectify, before the labours of the poor, in their prime, shall secure to them a serene old age; but the time will come, though by that day yonder grave may be level with the turf beside it, and there may be none to remember or speak of Cousin Marshall."

Summary of Principles illustrated in this Volume.

In a society composed of a natural gradation of ranks, some must be poor; *i. e.* have nothing more than the means of present subsistence.

Any suspension of these means of subsistence, whether through disaster, sickness, or decrepitude, converts the poor into the indigent.

Since indigence occasions misery, and disposes to vice, the welfare of society requires the greatest possible reduction of the number of the indigent.

Charity, public and private, or an arbitrary distribution of the subsistence-fund, has hitherto failed to effect this object; the proportion of the indigent to the rest of the population having increased from age to age.

This is not surprising, since an arbitrary distribution of the subsistence-fund, besides rendering consumption unproductive, and encouraging a multiplication of consumers, does not meet the difficulty arising from a disproportion of numbers to the means of subsistence.

The small unproductive consumption occasioned by the relief of sudden accidents and rare infirmities is necessary, and may be justifiably provided for by charity, since such charity does not tend to the increase of numbers; but, with this exception, all arbitrary distribution of the necessaries of life is injurious to society, whether in the form of private almsgiving, public charitable institutions, or a legal pauper-system.

The tendency of all such modes of distribution

having been found to be to encourage improvidence with all its attendant evils,—to injure the good while relieving the bad,—to extinguish the spirit of independence on one side,—and of charity on the other,—to encourage peculation, tyranny, and fraud,—and to increase perpetually the evil they are meant to remedy,—but one plea is now commonly urged in favour of a legal provision for the indigent.

This plea is that every individual born into a state has a right to subsistence from the state.

This plea, in its general application, is grounded on a false analogy between a state and its members, and a parent and his family.

A parent has a considerable influence over the subsistence-fund of his family, and an absolute control over the numbers to be supported by that fund; whereas the rulers of a state, from whom a legal provision emanates, have little influence over its subsistence-fund, and no control whatever over the number of its members.

If the plea of right to subsistence be grounded on the faults of national institutions, the right ought rather to be superseded by the rectification of those institutions, than admitted at the cost of perpetuating an institution more hurtful than all the others combined.

What, then, must be done to lessen the number of the indigent, now so frightfully increasing?

The subsistence-fund must be employed productively, and capital and labour be allowed to

take their natural course; *i. e.* the pauper system must, by some means or other, be extinguished.

The number of consumers must be proportioned to the subsistence-fund. To this end, all encouragements to the increase of population should be withdrawn, and every sanction given to the preventive check; *i. e.* charity must be directed to the enlightenment of the mind, instead of to the relief of bodily wants.

If not adopted speedily, all measures will be too late to prevent the universal prevalence of poverty in this kingdom, the legal provision for the indigent now operating the extinction of our national resources at a perpetually increasing rate.

London: Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES, Duke-street, Lambeth.

IRELAND.

Chapter I.

IRISH ECONOMY.

The Glen of the Echoes,—a title which conveys more to an English ear than its Irish counterpart, is one of the most obscure districts of a remote county of the Green Island, of which little is heard on this side the Channel except during the periodical returns of famine, when the sole dependence of its miserable population is on public benevolence. This glen probably owes its name to its vicinity to the sea, whose boisterous waves, keeping up a perpetual assault, have worn the coast into deep bays from the North Cape to Mizen-head, and whose hoarse music is chaunted day and night, summer and winter, from steep to steep along the shore. It is a rare thing for a traveller in the western counties of Ireland to behold a calm sea. Whatever the features of the land may be,—whether he passes through meadows and oat-fields, with villages and towns in the distance, or over black mountains and across shaking bogs, where a mud cabin here and there is the only vestige of human

habitation,—the Atlantic is still swelling and lashing the cliffs, as if bringing its mighty force to a perpetual war against the everlasting hills. Such a traveller would have pronounced that the Glen of the Echoes was designed for no other purpose than to give perpetual tidings of this warfare; for no place could be more wild in aspect, or less apparently improved by being inhabited. It was a tract lying between the cliffs and the mountains, consisting partly of bog, and partly of cultivated patches of land, divided one from another by ditches, and here and there by a turf bank, which was the best kind of fence used within many miles, except on the grounds belonging to one or two mansions within sight and reach. Scarce a tree or a shrub was to be seen within the bounds of the glen, though tradition related that a vast forest had once extended along the sides of the mountains; which tradition was confirmed by the circumstance that trees were easily found in the bog as often as the inhabitants were at a loss how to pass a ditch or drain, and there happened to be hands enough near to make a half-buried trunk into a temporary bridge, for the advantage of a short cut to any given spot. A resident proprietor, Mr. Rosso, had surrounded his house with young plantations; but as these were intercepted from view by the shoulder of the mountain, they did not relieve the bleakness of the glen itself. The woods of another proprietor, Mr. Tracey, who had been for some years on the continent with his family, had been so effectually

thinned by his agent, that little of them remained, and, in consequence, his mansion, Woodland Lodge, might now have better borne the name of a lodge in the wilderness. Woodland Lodge was about half a mile distant from Mr. Rosso's dwelling, and the contrast between the two was remarkable. The riding, driving, shooting, and fishing parties, in which the young Rossos were perpetually engaged, gave an appearance of bustle to the neighbourhood of their residence; and the fine growth of the plantations, the entireness of the stone fences, and the verdant crops of the surrounding fields, betokened good management: whereas the shutters of the Lodge were for ever closed; grass flourished on the door-steps, and moss on the window-sills; lean cattle were seen lying about in the woods, or rubbing themselves against the bark-bound trees; and goats, the most inveterate of destroyers, browsed among the ruins, which alone remained to mark the boundaries between cornland and pasture, plantation and bog. The traveller's greatest perplexity was as to where the people dwelt whom he saw scattered in the fields or lying about on the only visible track by which he could traverse the glen, or assembled around the Lodge chapel, if it chanced to be a holiday. It was only by close observation that he could perceive any other erections than the little schoolhouse, built by Mr. Rosso, and the farm-house, where a tenant of the better sort lived, and where the priest boarded. To the accustomed eye, however, a number of huts were visible on the

mountain side, which were more like tufts of black turf than human dwellings. An occasional wreath of smoke, the neighbourhood of goats, pigs, or a starved cow, marked them as the abodes of the tenantry of the glen,—a tenantry neither better nor worse off than that of many a district in the island.

The school-house just mentioned had been built by Mr. Rosso, who, though himself a Protestant, wished his poor neighbours to have such an education as they were willing to receive, though it was mixed with much that appeared to him very baneful superstition. To the astonishment, first, of the objects of his bounty, and, next, of his Protestant visitors, he appointed a Catholic teacher to this school, and interfered no further in its management than to see that the teacher was diligent, and that the school was kept open to as many children as chose to attend. The reasons he gave were, that there were none but Catholics within five miles, out of his own house, and that as his neighbours would at all events be Catholics, he saw no harm in giving them reading, writing, and arithmetic, in addition to that instruction, of a different kind, which their zealous priest, Father Glenny, took care that they should not be without. These reasons, whether sound or not, had no weight with his Protestant friends, who might, as they said, have forgiven him, if he had had the good of a tenantry of his own in view, but who began to doubt the goodness of his religion, morals, and politics, when they considered that he had

no tenantry but a farmer's family or two, who did not need his assistance; and that he was, therefore, gratuitously offering support to the most damnable faith in religion, and the most iniquitous creed in politics, that had ever deserved the wrath of God in heaven and of man upon earth. Mr. Rosso very quietly went on, holding an occasional conference with Father Glenny on the state of the school, and stepping in sometimes as he passed, to hear how the spelling improved, and whether the children could be induced to give attention to something besides arithmetic, which is, almost universally, the favourite accomplishment of the Irish who have had the advantage of any schooling at all. Father Glenny, and the young schoolmaster whom he had trained, always appeared glad to see Mr. Rosso, and even asked him occasionally to address the children, which he always took care to do so as to convey to them some useful information, or moral impression, which Protestant and Catholic would equally allow to be good. Thus, as the parties concerned wrought their benevolent work without jostling or jarring, it mattered little what any one else had to say about it. When importuned upon the subject, Mr. Rosso endeavoured to appease the inquirer by an acknowledgment that he might have found some difficulty if Protestant children had been brought to learn with Catholics, within so small a space, and with so few resources in the way of instruction; but he never could admit

the doubt of its being right to supply a Catholic education to a purely Catholic population.

It was a much easier matter to the neighbouring cottiers to spare their children to the school, than it would have been if they had enjoyed a more prosperous condition. An English labourer employs his boys and girls as soon as they are strong enough for work; or, at least, has the excuse that he may do so: but an Irish cottier finds his business finished when he has dug and planted his potato-field, and lounges about till harvest; or, if he hires himself out to labour, does not find out that there is anything for his girl to do but to milk the cow and boil the pot; or for his boy but to feed the pig. This leisure, joined with the eagerness for learning which subsists among the Irish poor, kept Mr. Rosso's school always full, and might, under good management, have wrought a material improvement upon the rising generation: but it is too much the way with Irish "scholards" to be always reading, never learning; to be listening to legends, when they should be gaining knowledge; and invoking the holy blood of Abel, instead of improving the powers which God has given to each of them for a far more natural and effectual dependence. The real advancement of the young folks of the glen was, therefore, much less than it ought to have been, in return for the time bestowed; and though some came out ready readers, and most fluent story-tellers, there was but little knowledge even among the oldest of them.

Dora Sullivan was one of the most promising of the troop, and the master praised the prudence of her parents, and her own docility, for coming to the school as regularly as ever when she was past sixteen. It was feared that she would disappear when her only brother departed for England, in hopes of making a little money to bring back to his father; but Dora's parents were proud of her, and anxious that the most should be made of her, and, therefore, spared her from home for the greater part of every day, though she was now like an only child to them. There was another reason for their not grudging her absence, which was, that Dan Mahony, who lived in the next cabin, and had frequent access to Dora's society, from being the son of her father's partner in his lease, had been long in love with Dora, and would have married her out of hand, if he had had so much as half an acre of ground to marry upon. All parties approved of the match; but would not hear of its taking place till Dan had a roof of his own to lodge a wife under, and did what they could to separate the young folks, by keeping Dora at school, and encouraging Dan to go and seek his fortune at a distance for a while; which the young man, after much murmuring, consented to do, upon a promise from both fathers that they would abstain from quarrelling about their partnership, or anything else, during his absence: a promise which they afterwards declared it was rash to have given, and next to impossible to observe. They contrived, however, to keep within the

terms of their vow, by venting their wrath, in all difficulties, upon the third partner in their lease, Tim Blayney, who made an opportunity to elope before rent-day came round, leaving nothing but an empty cabin and a patch of exhausted soil for his creditors to wreak their vengeance on.

These partnership tenancies were almost universal in the district. In one or two cases there were as many as fourteen or sixteen tenants associated in one lease: in which case the disputes respecting the division of their little meadows, or the payment of dues, became so virulent, that the agent could get no rest from squabbles and complaints in his occasional visits; and the middlemen, to whom the rent was paid, adopted the practice of getting it as they could, without waiting for the decision of opposing claims, or regarding the protests of those whose property they seized. Sullivan might think himself fortunate in having no more than two partners, since he could not be made to pay more than three times his share of rent; and being under vow not to quarrel with one partner, and the other being beyond the reach of his ears and tongue, he was in an enviable situation compared with many of his neighbours. As to the middlemen who were over them, indeed, there was little to choose among them. All pleaded alike that they had their rents to pay to other middlemen, or to the landlord; all were too busy to hearken to excuses, — too determined to be diverted from seizures,—too much accustomed to

their business to regard appeals to their justice or their compassion. They were not all, or on all occasions, equally pressing as to time. Their urgency about their dues depended somewhat upon their own resources, and much on those of the people under them. If they could afford to wait, and their debtors were likely not to be totally destitute sometime hence, the middlemen mercifully consented to wait, for certain considerations, and with the prospect of extorting rich interest upon the payment thus delayed. The middleman, Teale, to whom Sullivan, Mahony, and Blayney paid their rents, was one of this merciful class.

When Dora came home from the school one fine afternoon, she perceived from a distance, that Mr. Teale's horse was standing within the inclosure, and grazing the roof of her father's cabin. Her approach was seen by Teale from the door, for there was never a window in the place. His humour being propitiatory this day, he assailed Sullivan's weak side :—

" Here she comes,—the pretty creature she is, that Dora of yours."

" She's good, let alone her being pretty ; and 'tis she will write the note and sign it all the same as me. Here, Dora, my darling, hold the pen and write as you're bid, and show what a scholard Father Glenny has made of you."

Dora, who was remarkably quiet and thoughtful for her years, and suited her deportment to the gravity of her mind, did not quicken her movements, but prepared to obey her father's

request. She slipped down the petticoat tail which she had worn as a hood, gave the pig a gentle rebuke with her bare foot, which sent him out at the door, and room being thus found to turn about in, she made a table of her mother's low stool, took the paper Mr. Teale offered, dipped her pen in his inkhorn, and waited for directions.

"You have only to sign, you see," said Mr. Teale, "'Dora Sullivan, for John Sullivan,' that's all."

"Hold your whisht," cried the father: "you have had your time to write promises for me, Mr. Teale; but I've a scholard now of my own kin, and no occasion to be taken in with a scrap, when I don't know what's in it. So let Dora write after your words, Mr. Teale."

"Pho, pho, Sullivan;—for what and for why do you misdoubt me this day? Miss Dora will be more polite—and I so pressed for time."

Dora's politeness, however, disposed her to do as her father desired, and did not prevent her doing more. She wrote to Teale's dictation; and, before signing, looked up at her father, and asked if it was meant that he should promise to pay, both for himself and partners, all that should be in arrears, as well as all presently due (including the interest of the arrears), immediately after harvest, under penalty of seizure.

"I'm not clear of the meaning of it all, but I'm thinking it is much to pay, and more than we have to pay with, father; that's all."

"Be easy, Miss Dora, since it comes out of

your own mouth that the meaning is not clear. Only sign, my jewel; that's what is still to be done."

"But, father——"

"Quiet, my darling of the world, quiet! for what should I do? Here's Blayney, the scatter-brain! gone, the devil knows where, and left not a rag behind him; and Mahony has left the whole to me, entirely, the ruffian. And you wouldn't have the beasts driven away, Dora, and we left without a sup to sleep upon — you wouldn't, Dora?"

"Come, sign, my jewel," said Teale, "and up with your pail to be milking the creatures, Dora, and that's better than seeing them lifted to the pound."

Dora still balanced the pen, vainly wishing that Dan was at hand to fulfil his father's part of the contract. Sullivan urged her to finish. She begged to read it over once more aloud, and at the end asked if there was no way of making such an agreement as many made, that certain kinds of produce should constitute the rent, while the family lived as they could upon the rest, and so have nothing to do with coin, which she simply supposed was the cause of all the misery in the world. Some middlemen, she knew, took butter and pigs for the rent, and oats where there were any, and then there was no trouble about money.

"With your leave, Miss Dora, we'll hear what the priest has to say about that another time for I suppose what you say is all one as

listening to him; and very natural: but I must be going, my jewel; so give me my scrap, and no more words."

As there was no help for it, Dora signed, and then saw the pen put into her father's hand, that he might make his mark, without which Mr. Teale would not allow the business to be finished. She did not smile, as her mother did, at Sullivan's joke about a raking fellow, like him, sitting down with a pen, like a priest or one of the priest's scholards. When the middleman was gone, and her father laughed at the easiness of putting a man off with a scrap of paper instead of the rent, she took up her pail to go and milk her lean kine.

"Off with you, honey, and leave your sighs behind you," said her mother. "If I had begun as early as you, sighing and sighing, there would have been little breath left in my body by this. To-morrow or next day will do for care, honey. Go to your milking to-day, anyhow."

"By dad, honey, your mother known more trouble and sorrow by your time nor you, by reason she was my wife, and had babbies to lose in the fever. I would have dried up her tears in a hurry if she had had no more to bestow them on nor you; and so will Dan, by dad, if you've no better a welcome for him."

Dora smiled, and went about her dairy affairs, her father following to help, in case the kine wanted lifting; that is, in case they should be too weak from starvation to rise up at bidding to be milked. The poor animals being fairly

set upon their legs, without much fear of falling, Sullivan directed his steps towards the last bush which was left in his field, and cut it down for fuel, not having turf enough dried to boil the pot this evening.

Sullivan was not very fond of looking about him on his little farm, or of observing the portions of his partners. It was hard to say which was in the worst condition, or which might have been in the best if properly cultivated. Their nearness to the coast put them in the way of manure; such part of the soil as was dry might have been made into fine grazing land by the frequent rains which fell in that district, or have answered for the growth of various crops in rotation; and such as was wet might have been improved, to almost any extent, by the limestone from the neighbourhood, or by fine sand from the beach. Instead of laying plans with prudence for their common advantage, however, and prosecuting them in harmony, the three partners made choice each of what his land should produce, and neither varied his crop from first to last. Their only agreement was to divide their portions by ditches, pronouncing a stone fence a trouble not to be thought of, turf banks a botheration, and a ditch the most "asy and nate to the hand." This done, Mahony sowed barley every year, and every year less and less came up; and that which did make a shift to grow yielded less and less meal, till he began to wonder what ailed the crop that it had come down from being food for man, to be nothing better

than pig's meat. Blayney tried his hand at oat culture with no better success than his neighbour, the produce being such as many a horse on the London road would look upon with disdain. Sullivan grew potatoes, as we have seen. While the land was in good heart, that is, for a season or two from the commencement of his lease, he had grown apple potatoes; but when the soil became exhausted, he could raise only an inferior kind, which is far more fit for cattle than for men, and on which he and his family could not have subsisted, if it were not for the milk with which they varied their meals. Sullivan's acre and half did not yield now more than eleven hundred stone; and as the consumption amounted to more than four stone a-day, at fourteen pounds to the stone,—a very moderate allowance for three hearty people,—there was no chance of paying the rent out of the crop, even if Sullivan had been answerable for nobody's dues but his own. He depended upon his live stock to clear him with the middlemen; or, rather, he depended upon nothing, but made a shift, when the time came near, to sell and raise the money somehow; and when that could not be done, he deferred the evil day, by giving his note of hand, as we have seen. Half these difficulties might have been avoided, if no one had stood between Sullivan and his landlord; and the other half, if he had known how to make the best of his own resources. In the first place, Mr. Tracey would never have thought of asking such a rent as eight pounds per acre

for such land; and, in the next place, he would have been so far considerate as to encourage Sullivan to improve the land; whereas the middleman under whom Mr. Teale held the place, paid the landlord a moderate rent, and made his profit out of the higher rent he asked of Mr. Teale, who, in his turn, did the same by Sullivan and his partners: so that the poorest tenant paid the most, and the landlord got the least; or, to put the matter in another light, the little farm was expected to support three families of tenants, and to pay rent to three landlords. Again: two of these landlords, having only a temporary interest in the place, cared only for getting as much out of it as they could while connected with it, and had no view to its improvement, or regard for its permanent value. This ruinous system has received a check by the operation of the Subletting Act; but not before it has inflicted severe injuries on the proprietors of the soil, and never-to-be-forgotten hardships on their tenantry.

Chapter II.

IRISH LIABILITIES.

Dan Mahony being fairly out of the way, Dora's parents agreed to her earnest request, countenanced by Father Glenny, that she might leave school, and try to earn somewhat wherewith to

help the rent. Dora now sat at her spinning-wheel almost the whole day; and her mother doing the same, a respectable addition was made by them to the few shillings Sullivan had been able to muster. The next was a fine potato season moreover, and Sullivan reasonably reckoned on being able to sell a considerable portion of the produce of his land, and thus preventing any addition to the arrears already due, even if he could not discharge some part of them. The gentle Dora now smiled, instead of sighing, when her father asked where was the good of "troubling the brain at all at all about what was to come, when the good and the bad was hid entirely;" and answered only by a kiss, when he inquired for any good that had come out of the hitherto grave looks of his "darlin' o' the world."

The rent for the year was made up just in time by the sale of only one pig; and Mr. Teale was surprised, and looked as if he did not know whether or not to be pleased, when the sum was forthcoming. He congratulated Sullivan on having got a solvent partner in Blayney's place, and on Dan Mahony having sent his father the means of paying his share; so that Sullivan was free from all encumbrance but that for which he had given his note of hand. Dora's heart leaped within her, while she listened to the facts, and to her father's fervent blessing on her lover, whose heart was evidently still at home, wherever his feet might be wandering. She did not know,—for her father had actually forgotten to tell her,

—that the tithe was not yet paid, nor had been for two years; the tithe-proctor having accommodated him by taking his note-of-hand for the amount, and for various incidental charges. Bitterly did Dora afterwards grieve that she had been for a while spared this additional anxiety.

The next time she returned from confession, it was with a light heart and a tripping step approaching to a dance. Father Glenny had readily absolved her from the sins of mistrusting heaven in regard of her father's rent, and mistrusting a holy and solemn oath in regard of Dan Mahony, having, in dark hours, been tempted to doubt his remembering the Glen of the Echoes, and all that was in it; which was a great sin, inasmuch as Dan had vowed a solemn vow, which heaven would guard, to look upon himself as a banished wanderer, till she should, face to face, release him from the oath. Father Glenny not only gave her absolution, and taught her how to keep the tempter at a distance next time, by repeating the oath, and recalling the circumstances under which it was made, but spoke well of Dan, and seemed to think the sooner all doubts were laid, by their being made man and wife, the better.

Dora immediately began to obey his directions by recalling, during her walk home, the minutest circumstances connected with the vow. She could just discern, at the highest point of the rugged mountain-road, the big stone under which they knelt when she was obliged to leave him to pursue his way alone; she could mark the very

spot where she had given him the "Poesy of prayers," and where they had exchanged their crucifixes, and called six very choice saints to witness the vow. While gazing in this direction, shading her eyes from the setting sun, she perceived men driving two cows up this very road, sometimes pulling the poor creatures by a noose over the obstructions in their way, and sometimes lifting them up as fast as they fell. Dora's lightness of heart was gone in a moment. From the circumstance of there being several men to take charge of two cows, she was convinced that the cattle had been distrained from some tenant in the Glen; and she had a misgiving that they might be her own father's.

When she came within sight of home, she did not know what to make of the appearance of things. The cows were not visible; but they were apt to disappear among the ditches, or behind the cabin. Her father gave tokens of merriment; but with rather more activity than was natural to him. He was throwing stones and bits of turf at the pigs in the ditches, so as to make them run hither and thither, and singing, to drown their squeaking, in the following strain:—

"You're welcome to the beasts for sale;
For the devil take me if I go to gaol.
My wife and they riz a mournful lowing,
And they looked jist in my eyes so knowing.
So now keep away, if you plase, that's all;
And the curse o' Jasus light on ye all!"

This song, as soon as the words were distin-

guishable, told a pretty plain story, and the occupation of Dora's mother told a yet plainer. She was breaking up the milk-pails to feed the fire; and, in answer to the girl's remonstrance, demanded what was the use of vexing their sight with what would be tempting them to thirst, and putting them in mind to curse the "scruff of the earth" that had robbed them of their kine? But could not the cattle be got back again?—Lord save her! when did she ever know Mr. Teale give up anything he had clutched? Mr. Teale? he who had just been paid? Even so. He was behind-hand with his dues, like the people he scorned beneath his feet; and instead of seizing his car, horses, or the luxuries of his house, the man who was over him distrained upon the poor tenants, who had already paid their rents; while Teale looked on, amused to see the Sullivans and others compelled to pay rent twice over, while he escaped. The people having, in former cases, discovered that this monstrous grievance is not known in England, had, for some time, come to the conclusion that England is favoured by Government, while there is no justice to be had in Ireland; not being aware that the law is the same in both countries, and that the exemption from this fatal liability which English cultivators enjoy, is owing to the rarity of the practice of subletting in their island.

It soon appeared that Teale was disappointed in the amount of the levy upon his tenants, since the same men returned early in the morning to take what else they could get, by virtue of the

note-of-hand. The crop, just ready for gathering in, was dug up and carted away, a small provision only being left for the immediate wants of the family. The fowls and pigs disappeared at the same time; and to all the hubbub which disturbed the morning hours, the deep curses of Sullivan, the angry screams of his wife, the cackling of the alarmed poultry, the squealing of the pigs, and the creaking of the crazy cars, there succeeded a hush, which was only interrupted by the whirring of Dora's wheel. She had taken to her spinning, partly to conceal her tears, partly to drown thoughts which would otherwise have almost distracted her.

The ominous quiet of the cabin did not last long. Sullivan was sitting, so as to block up the doorway, with his back against the mud-wall; he was chewing a straw, and looking out vacantly upon his trampled field, when his wife started up from her seat beside the fire-place, where the pot of cold potatoes was hanging over an extinguished fire. She greeted him with a tremendous kick.

"Get out o' that, you cratur!" cried she. "I'm thinking there's room and a plenty beyond there, let alone the styes with not a soul of a pig in them. Get out with ye!"

"Give over, honey, or it will be the worse for ye," said Sullivan. "It's my own place where I'm lying entirely, and the prospect beyónd is not so pleasing to the eye as it was, honey: that's all."

"The more's the reason you should be bestir-

ring yourself, like me, to hide what's left us in the bog."

"What do you mean, if your soul is not gone astray?" inquired the husband.

"Work, work! if you'd save a gun, or a bed, or a bottle of spirits from the proctor. Into the bog with 'em, if you wouldn't have him down upon you, hearing, as he will, how little is left to pay the tithe. Leave off, I tell you," she shouted to poor Dora; "whisht, and give over with your whirring and whirring, that wearies the ears of me. Leave off, or by this and that, I'll make you sorry."

Dora did her best to understand the evil to be apprehended, and to guard against it. She roused her father from his posture of affected ease, sought out a hiding-place among the rushes in a waste tract, where they might stow their household goods, and helped to strip the dwelling as actively as if they had been about to remove to a better abode. While her father and she were laden with the chest which contained her mother's bridal provision of bed-linen, which had thus far been preserved from forfeiture, a clapping of hands behind them made them turn and observe a sign that enemies were at hand.

"By the powers, here they come," cried her father. "Work, work, for the bare life, my jewel. In with it, and its back we'd be going with as innocent faces as if we'd been gathering rushes. Here, pull your lap full."

Dora could not at first tell whether their movements had been observed.

"God save you, kindly, Mr. Shehan," said Sullivan to the proctor. "Its just in time you'd be come to see the new way of thatching we have got, and these gentlemen to take a lesson, may be. Dora, my jewel, throw down the rushes and get some more out of hand."

"One of my gentlemen shall go with her," said Shehan. "There are things among the rushes sometimes, Sullivan, that fill a house as well as thatch it."

Dora invited any of the gentlemen to help her, and led the way to a rush bank, in an opposite direction; but, declining to follow her lead, they entered the house, and laughed, when they found it completely empty.

"You're grown mightily afraid of the sky, Sullivan," observed Shehan, "since you'd be after mending your thatch, sooner than getting a bed to lie on, to say nothing of a bit and sup, which I don't see you have to be boasting of."

All Sullivan's good reasons why he should suddenly mend his thatch with rushes that lay "convaynient" went for nothing with the proctor, who had caught a glimpse of the stratagem. The claim for tithes, arrears, and fees was urged, certain ominous-looking papers produced, and no money being forthcoming, the goods were found and carried off, even down to Dora's wheel, with the flax upon it. The proctor gave no heed to the despair of the destitute tenants, but rather con-

gratulated himself on having heard of the former seizures in time to appropriate what remained.

Of those whom he had left behind, the father lay down once more in the doorway, declaring himself nigh hand brokenhearted, and melancholy entirely; his wife went about to interest the neighbours in their wrongs; and Dora kneeled at her prayers in the darkest corner of the cabin. After a time, when the twilight began to thicken, her father started up in great agitation, and dared somebody outside to come in and see what he could find for rent, or tithes, or tolls, or tax of any kind. His creditors might come swarming as thick as boys going to a fair, but they would find nothing, thanks to the proctor: unless they carried him off bodily, they might go as they came, and he would try whose head was the hardest before it came to that. Dora perceived that her father was in too great a passion to listen to one who seemed not to be a creditor; and she went to the door to interpose. More quick-sighted than her father, she instantly saw, through the dim light, that it was Dan; and not even waiting for the assurance of his voice, threw herself on his neck, while he almost stifled her with caresses.

"Dan, are you come back true? Just speak that word."

"True as the saints to the blessed, darling of my heart."

"Then God is merciful to send you now, for we want true friends to raise us up, stricken as we are to the bare ground."

"Bare ground, indeed," cried Dan, entering

and looking for a resting-place, on which to deposit the sobbing and clinging Dora. "They have used you basely, my heart's life, but trust to me to make it up in your own way to each of you. You trust me, Dora, don't you, as the priest gave leave?"

Dora silently intimated her trust in her lover's faith, which it had never entered her head to doubt—love having thus far been entirely unconnected in her mind with thoughts of the world's gear. She wept on his shoulder, leaving it to her father to tell the story of their troubles, and only looked up when she heard her mother's voice approaching, to ask, with great simplicity, what they were to do next?

"To be married in the morning, if father Glenny was at hand, and consenting," her lover replied. He had two guineas in his pocket for the fees; and then they would be all on a footing, (as he had no more money,) and must help one another to justice and prosperity as well as they could. Sullivan interposed a few prudent objections, but soon gave up when he found his little Dora was against him. The fact was, that her filial duty, religion, and love, all plied her at once in favour of an immediate marriage. She had always had a firm faith that Dan could achieve anything he pleased; a faith which was much confirmed by his having paid his father's rent, and saved, moreover, enough for his marriage fees. It appeared to her that Providence had sent this able helper in the time of her parents' need, and that it was not for her to prevent his

lifting them out of poverty as speedily as might be.

Dan told them that there was to be a letting of land in the neighbourhood, the next day; and that if he was made sure in time of having Dora for his cabin-keeper, he would bid for an acre or two, and did not doubt to do as well in the world as his father before him. Of all this, Dora's mother, on her return, seemed to have no more doubt than the rest of the party; and she immediately dismissed all her cares, except the regret that she could not walk so far as to see her daughter married. Dan was now requested to name his hour for departure in the morning, and to go home to his father, who had had but a hasty glimpse of him on his return. He busied himself in obtaining some clean dry straw and a rush candle for his poverty-stricken friends, overwhelmed Dora with caresses, and ran home.

Dora had little imagined, two hours before, with what a light heart she should lie, this night, on the cold floor of their bare cabin. To have Dan to lean upon was everything. She could not admit any further fear for the future. They had only to begin the world again, that was all; and with the advantage, too, of Dan's experience and skill in getting money; which it did not occur to her, might be of no avail, where no money could be got, or where it passed immediately into the hands of one tyrannical claimant to another. This ease from apprehension formed the substratum of her happy thoughts of this night; and it was her filial piety, only, which made her

matter of so much importance to her. For herself, it was enough that Dan was her own. She had not a wish beyond what would be bestowed by the priest's office and blessing, which she hoped so soon to have obtained.

Father Glenny, though at first surprised at being called on to perform the marriage ceremony so early in the morning, and before so few witnesses, and mortified on behalf of the young folks, that the customary revelry and sanction of numbers must be dispensed with in their case, had nothing to say against the proceeding. Having ascertained that the friends of both parties approved, he went on to exhort the young couple to remember that they were now in the act of fulfilling a divine command, and to trust for the blessing of God on their union accordingly. He then performed the ceremony and dismissed them; the bridegroom having taken care, as a point of honour, that the priest should not lose much in respect of fees, the amount being tendered by the parties instead of collected from an assemblage of guests. Father Glenny did not refuse the offering. He was unwilling to wound the feelings of the offerers: he was not aware of the extent of their poverty; and, moreover, considered the fees his due, even more than a Protestant clergyman would have done in a similar instance,—the remuneration of the Catholic clergy in Ireland being principally derived from marriage fees.

The pressure of the times obliged the proceedings of the whole party to be more business-like than is at all usual on the day of an Irish

wedding. The bridegroom stayed but to give his Dora into her mother's arms, and then set off, accompanied by Sullivan, for the place where two or three lots of ground were to be let by auction, or, as the phrase goes, by cant.

They were just in time to take a survey of the lots before bidding. There was small choice of advantages; for the preceding tenants, knowing that they need not hope for a renewal, and that the mode of letting by cant would, in all probability, turn them out of the place, had exhausted the land to the utmost for the last two or three years. This measure not only gave them as much as they could obtain for the time, but afforded a chance of getting the lot back again on cheaper terms. The excessive competition which is usual on such occasions, however, made this last hope a very doubtful one. The only thing that was certain beforehand was, that the affair would prove a very bad bargain to all parties:—to the landlord, because his land was nearly ruined, and little rent would, therefore, be paid, however much was promised; to the successful bidder, because he would be unable to fulfil his absurd promises about the rent, and be therefore liable to driving, distraint, or ejectment; and to the unsuccessful bidders, because they had come a great way, full of hopes and visions of being able to settle on the land, and must return destitute as they came, and disappointed.

A crowd surrounded the man of power, as soon as he appeared on the ground. Many an offering had he had that morning of dutiful service, of

overstrained civility, or of something more substantial, from those who could afford it, with the hope of inclining him to favour their particular bid. The most diversified claims to a preference were whispered into his ear, or exhibited before his eyes, wherever he went. One had picked up the landlord's heir, when thrown by his pony into a bog in childhood; another had had the honour of lodging the agent, one stormy night, among the mountains. One limped ostentatiously before Mr. Flanagan, to remind him that the lameness happened from one of the landlord's fences having fallen upon him, while dozing beneath its shelter; another, a feeble old man, pleaded a yet unfulfilled promise of a Mr. Tracey who had been in his grave nearly thirty years.

Mr. Flanagan took no further notice of all this than to bid the people get out of his way. From many a clutch did he disengage his skirts; on many a petition, savoured with a scent of potheen, did he turn his back; many a venerable blue top-coat, and gray cloak, did he elbow from his side, before he could proceed to business. When once begun, it required an eye as practised, and an ear as inured, as his, to distinguish that any business was proceeding, amidst the hubbub of voices, the shoving, jostling, and scrambling, which took place while the bidding went on. The confusion fairly baffled some lookers on, who stopped their horses on the outskirts of the crowd to observe the scene. Mr. Alexander Rosso, just from college, his brother Henry, and a foreign gentleman, a college friend of the former, were

taking their morning ride, surrounded by their dogs, when it occurred to Alexander, that this was the occasion on which to exhibit to his friend the resemblance between the Irish and his countrymen. He was scarcely aware that the occasion on which the people were assembled was similar to that which often collects the Italian peasantry in groups, to contend with equal vehemence for slips of land, which they hold on the same terms. The Irish cottier is of the same class with the metayer of Italy; and middlemen are, with few exceptions, alike all the world over: they are what it is natural to expect men to be under circumstances of strong temptation to oppression and of absolute impunity.

The Italian gentleman, after gazing with fixed attention, and an amused expression of countenance, for some minutes, used an expressive gesture, to intimate that he could make nothing of it.

"The first lot is disposed of, Henry, is it not?" asked Alexander. "That half-naked, capering fellow bid highest, I think."

"Yes," replied Henry; "and he looks as if he had just had the mines of Peru given him."

"He!" exclaimed the foreigner, in astonishment. "And how will he pay?"

"No one will pay all," replied Henry, laughing. "The agent can only weigh probabilities; and if he happens to know that that poor fellow has a little coin hidden somewhere, to help him on for a year or two, he will stop at his bidding as the highest."

"But why stop? Is it not the people's part to stop?"

"We might wait long enough for that," replied Alexander. "They will bid against each other till midnight. They will offer a hundred per annum per acre rather than lose their chance of getting the land. Our people are very rich in promises."

"And how much has the ragged man promised?"

"Flanagan!" shouted Henry, above the din, which sank to silence in a moment, "how much has your first lot brought you?"

"Nine pounds per acre, Sir, and yonder stands the tenant."

The successful bidder, came forward, smiling and scraping, not a whit ashamed of the bare knees which had burst through what had once been breeches, or of the tatters which were bound about his person, in various directions, by hay-ropes, there being no other way of keeping them together.

"Ask him," urged the eager foreigner, "ask him where his pounds are to come from, and why he wishes to be a farmer."

"There is most likely a lady in the case," observed Henry; and then turning to the man, he inquired whether he had not done a very daring thing in engaging to pay so high a yearly sum?

"God save your honour kindly, the mother is turned out of her own, beyond there; and its a

cabin I'm wishing to give her, old creature as she is, and a bite and sup with me."

"And is there nobody else, friend, likely to be your cabin-keeper?"

The man's countenance fell, and he replied that there was to have been one last Shrovetide, but that she was forcibly carried off, and married to another man, before he could overtake her. Henry turned the subject hastily, shocked at his own curiosity, which had led to such a disclosure. He asked the man whether he could honestly say that he had a week's provision beforehand for his mother and himself? The tenant laughed and pointed to his new ground, saying that they might glean potatoes enough among the ridges, after the digging, to keep them for a few days till they could look about them a bit. His mother moreover had a cow, and a slip of a pig. He ended by bewitchingly asking for the "blissen" on his enterprise. The foreigner was amused to observe that in Ireland a blessing comes out of the pocket instead of the mouth; not that the verbal blessing is absolutely worthless; but it is considered merely as an accessory to something more substantial.

The process of giving the blessing quickened the bidding, as it was feared the gentlemen might leave the ground before the next successful candidate was ready to pay his smiling service. The lot was awarded to Dan, who, after tossing up his hat, advanced towards the horsemen, followed by his father-in-law. They observed to one another that he looked better qualified than

his predecessor to pay rent, his dress being decent, and his manner betokening more forethought and experience.

"Have you an old mother to find a shelter for, too?" inquired Alexander.

"There's the mother and the father too that's to the fore," replied Dan, turning to introduce Sullivan.

"And the darling too that's been his wife almost since the sun rose," added Sullivan. "Dan has had the priest's blessing this morn, and sure your honours' won't be long in following?"

"I would have married in the evening, Dan, if I had been you," said Henry. "The land first, and then the girl, is the prudent way, you know. How would you have managed, if you had had the girl without the land?"

Dan could not pretend to guess what Providence's other way of providing for him and Dora would have been; the actual case was as much as any man had to do with. This reasoning put him in the actual case of receiving a large blessing from the foreigner, who then rode off with his companions, notwithstanding the vehement prayers of the crowd that they would stay till the third and last lot was disposed of. They had neither time nor further blessing to spare this day. They did not, however, escape by turning their backs. The third new tenant was posted in the middle of their road homewards, and on their approach, extended his arms, as if to embrace the three horses with their riders, praying for an infinity of blessings on their

merciful and tender and bountiful hearts, and expressing his expectation that he should begin the world with a trifle from their honours, like Pat and Dan.

"See what you have done, Henry," said his brother. "We shall be expected to pay tribute, henceforward, to every new tenant, as often as a cant takes place within twenty miles."

Henry set himself seriously to explain that their bounty of this day was purely accidental, and that none of the party meant to give again on a similar occasion. He would not dismiss the present applicant without a gift, since his companions had had one; but he gave him less than the others, in order to enforce what he had said. The man followed for some way, keeping close in their rear in hope of their relenting, and then retired to the road side, grumbling as if defrauded of a right.

"It is the most difficult thing in the world," observed Henry, "to deal with these people; they have such strange notions of *right*. Every favour is immediately considered as a precedent to be for ever acted upon: every change in our methods of doing kindness is looked upon as caprice, and every suspension of a gratuity as an injury."

"The same is the case in all regions," observed the foreigner, "where the people have other dependence than on themselves. If it is remarkable in Ireland and in Italy, it is because the people of these unhappy countries have been long educated by political injury to servile de-

pendence. It is for you to rectify their notions of *right*."

"How must we do so?"

"You must make their little possessions secure, and also fortify their labours with the moral certainty of a due reward. While this is being done,—and it will be long in the doing,—you must vary your modes of charity perpetually, in testimony of its being optional: and O, above all things, save your poor from the blight of a legal charity! Save them from the delusion that they have a right, which, among a reckless people, would presently absorb all other rights, making cottiers of your middlemen, and beggars of your landlords, and converting this fertile region into a wilderness, which shall but echo the wild cry of famine."

Chapter III.

IRISH ADVENTURE.

The accidental bounty of the Mr. Rossos enabled Dan to furnish himself with the few tools he needed to begin his tillage, and his wife with a wheel and a small stock of flax. As for clothes, they were obliged to wear, day and night, those they had on, having neither a change for the day, nor a bed which might

supersede the use of them at night. This was thought no great hardship by any of the family, for it was a very common one. Many of their neighbours never attempted to undress after their garments had passed a certain point of wear. The most tidy, who really did patch their clothes very patiently while the patches would hold together, were for the most part content, after that time, to tie them on till they dropped away in fragments. Their reason for not undressing was one which their reproving superiors could not gainsay;—that, once off, no power on earth could get the garments on again. This was nearly the condition now of Sullivan's clothing and that of his wife; but they could scarcely trouble themselves to think of such a trifle in the midst of the affairs they were undertaking. New life and spirit had been given them by the timely support yielded by their connexion with Dan; and they all, under his direction, gave full play to the spirit of enterprise which ever distinguishes the Irish when in prospect of an equitable recompense of their exertions. Sullivan might now be seen toiling as a labourer under his son-in-law, thatching the cabin-roof (now in earnest) with rushes from the sandbanks, or bringing sand from the beach to work into the boggy soil of the potato-field, or cutting turf for fuel, or even carrying loads of it on his back for sale. The first money thus gained went to hire a pack-horse from one of Mr. Rosso's tenants, for the carrying out a further supply of turf; and this answered so well, that Dan

finished by selling their own store, and making fuel for home consumption, after the manner of the Irish peasantry, when the turf in the neighbourhood is exhausted; that is, by scraping up what is left in the state of mire, and baking and shaping it with the hand till it becomes dry enough to be combustible. Their food was but poor as to quantity and quality, till Dan thought himself justified in adding a quarter of a cow to his establishment; from which time, potatoes and milk, milk and potatoes, were thought as good a provision as they had a right to look for.

When that which is usually the idle season came round, namely, the weeks which succeed the potato-sowing, when nothing more is to be done to the crop, Dan proposed a grand scheme to his father-in-law,—nothing less than to enlarge their cabin by adding a room at the end. Sullivan smacked his lips, and stretched himself, somewhat mortified to have his expected period of rest broken in upon by new toils: but, remembering that the summer nights were, indeed, somewhat oppressive to four people sleeping within a space of twelve feet by eight, with no air-hole but the door; and looking forward, moreover, to the inconveniences of Dora's confinement in such a place, he gave a groaning assent to the undertaking, and went through his part of it with a tolerable grace. He cursed, for his own sake, however proud for his daughter's, the grand notions which Dan seemed to have about a cabin, making the new apartment half as long again as the old one, and leaving space in the mud wall

for a window. When finished, however, all was right in his eyes, and he did not sigh, as did the young folks, for yet more comforts; if indeed, they were not rather necessaries. Dora wished for a bed for her mother, who was growing more and more weakly, and got little rest on her bundle of straw. Dan wished for the same comfort for Dora, but was obliged at present to content himself with looking forward to the time when they might increase their stock of fowls, and obtain feathers enough from them, to sew up in a sack, and make a bed of. He had a little money by him, and was often tempted to spend it in Dora's behalf; but they both agreed that the first necessity was, to keep out of the clutches of the agent and the tithe proctor. Of paying the whole rent, there was but little chance; but as they had no partners, and as nobody near was likely to pay better than themselves, they hoped to satisfy the agent with such a proportion as might fairly average what he was in the habit of receiving in lieu of the nominal rent. On the whole, they considered themselves going on "fair and easy, and prosperous entirely."

They had been nearly a year in their abode, the rent-day was coming round, and many jokes were continually suggested by that fruitful topic, when Father Glenny looked in upon them, in the course of his customary circuit among his people. Dora came curtseying to the door to invite him to repose himself on the turf seat within; her mother rose feebly to pay her reverence as he entered, and hoped he would be pleased to remain till

her husband and Dan returned; the one being at work some way off, and the other having business to settle with the agent. The priest, who looked remarkably grave, assured her he was in no hurry, and examined their countenances as if to discover whether they had any thing particular to communicate. As they waited, "mannerly" for him to introduce his own topics, he began by remarking on the improvements in the place, and enquiring into the worldly condition of its inhabitants. His countenance brightened as he listened to their cheerful reports of their prospects, but he still seemed uneasy till he had put one question. Had Dan taken care to secure the lease? he asked; adding that this was a point on which many tenants were unaccountably and disastrously careless. They would put off signing and securing for months, if not years, after taking possession, and many were the cases in which he had known them rue their procrastination. Dora replied with a smile, that she hoped she might, by this time, say that the lease was in her husband's pocket; it had been drawn up, almost ever since they settled in this place, but, for some reason or another, never signed till now, such being her husband's business with the agent this morning, and also to pay the first year's rent. At this moment, Sullivan burst in, exclaiming, "Lord save us! your reverence, what can have fallen out now? Here's Dan coming up the glen, raving like mad, and my own eyes seen him hold up his fist at the agent; and they, as quiet as lambs together till now.

Dora was flying out to meet her husband, when the priest laid his hand on her arm.

"Stop, my daughter, and listen to me," he said. "I know it all. For your husband's sake hear it from me, that you may not add to his passion. Remember your vow of trust, daughter, and renew it now, in your time of need."

Dora sat down trembling, beseeching, by her looks, that she might hear the truth at once. Father Glenny related that Mr. Tracey had written to his agent to say, that it was evident to him that his property had been much injured, and the condition of his tenantry no less so, by the subdivision of land having been encouraged to too great an extent: that it was his pleasure that the reverse process of consolidation should immediately begin; and that for this purpose, no new leases of small portions of land should be given, and no partnership tenancies allowed henceforward; his intention being, that instead of a small plot of ground supporting many holders, one substantial holder should unite several small plots of ground into a respectably-sized farm. The zealous agent, Father Glenny went on to say, had looked round him to see how many tenants he could eject, and had put Dan and his family down in his list; the unfortunate delay in signing the lease having put their little possession into his power. When Dora had made sure that this was all, she turned to her father who was standing against the wall, tattooing with his brogues upon the threshold. She might have thought that he did not hear the news, but that he was humming in an under voice

the tune to which he had sung, on a somewhat similar occasion, the burden—

"The curse o' Jasus light on ye all! "

His old wife not daring to give vent to her anger in the presence of the priest, had hooded her head with her petticoat tail, and ceased her spinning. Father Glenny was beginning a strain of consolation when Sullivan cried,

" O murther, Dora, my darling, what a sight it is to see Dan raging like the sea itself! King of Glory! he is mad entirely."

The priest placed himself by the threshold, so as to be the first to meet the unhappy man. At the sight of the black coat, the oaths and threats were silenced; and presently the knit brow relaxed, the fierce eye was tamed before Father Glenny's mild, serious gaze. Before any words were exchanged, Dora drew her husband in with a smile, and asked him how they were worse off now than on their wedding morning, and where was the wonder of young and poor people like themselves having to go forth again to seek a home? She did not doubt they should again find one, and have a warm corner moreover for her father when he should be past his work.

Her husband impatiently stopped her, saying that there were no more homes to be had for poor tenants, and that if she wanted a warm corner, she must seek it among the beggar's haunts in the towns,—warm enough, with seven families in a cellar; a comfortable place truly, for her babe to be born in, and her parents to end their days in

and disregarding the priest's presence, he prayed for confusion on every mother's son of the Traceys from the first that had gone before, to the last that should come after. This brought Father Glenny to interpose.

"Peace, my son!" he said. "It is blasphemy to curse man for the judgments of heaven."

He was going on, but Dan interrupted him to say that he was not thinking of heaven at all in the matter. What he cursed was the clearing of the estate, and the cruelty of those who would turn so many out of house and home.—Father Glenny still insisted that this was heaven's work, since the Traceys were no Protestants, no strangers in the land, but members of the true church, ancient possessors of the soil, only kept at a distance by being deprived of their political rights, and as anxious as gentry should be, for the prosperity of their people. He mentioned that Mr. Tracey, while giving the fatal order, had mentioned the good of the tenantry as one of the motives thereto. It was clear to him that good would arise out of this measure, since poverty had increased in proportion to the subdivision of the land; and the distress which must prevail in the mean time, should be patiently borne as the judgment of heaven on the sins of the poor, and on the slowness of the rich to divide their substance with the needy.—Dora, who was accustomed to receive with reverence whatever her priest let fall, enquired humbly whether he would have them go and ask assistance from Mr. Rosso,

he being the only person in their neighbourhood who had substance to divide with the needy. Father Glenny shook his head, sighed, and advised them to remain where they were, till he should have considered their case and that of some of their neighbours, who were suffering under similar calamity. On inquiring whether they had any savings, Dora joyfully mentioned the rent, naturally supposing that Dan would not part with it when he found how matters stood; but her countenance fell when she extracted from her now moody husband the fact that the agent had received him with a smiling countenance, requested him to count down the money while he prepared his pen and ink, signed to his assistant to sweep off the gold, silver, and copper into a drawer and turn the key, and then, and not before, explained the necessity he was under, of refusing to fulfil his engagement, scoring the lease from corner to corner with his newly-mended pen as he spoke, and bidding the insulted Dan move aside to make way for his betters, who were fortunate enough not to have put off signing and sealing.

"Then we have nothing left," said Dora calmly.

"Murther!" cried her father, "and we might have had an elegant bed to have carried away on the shoulders of us, instead of a coat that has nothing left but the sleeves, by reason of their having never been used. And much besides is it we might have had if you had let us be com-

fortable, Dan, and leave the rent to take care of itself in peace. By dad, we may very well pass for beggars without any pretending."

His son-in-law looked fiercely at him, and the priest interposed to show that it was all right. All were to have their dues, and Mr. Tracey should, therefore, receive his rent; for paying which honestly, Dan might fully trust he should never suffer. After more words of exhortation and comfort, the priest gave Dora a small present of money, and expressed his hope of seeing them all at mass in the morning, after which he would converse further with them on their affairs.

Dan stood watching him from the door, after receiving his blessing with a dubious expression of countenance. Dora had sunk down at her mother's feet, hiding her face in her lap, when she heard her husband say, "Praise to the powers, he's out of sight! Up with you, you women, and all ready for nightfall."

To the question of all three, what he meant to do? Dan replied, by giving orders, in a tone which none dared disobey. He made Sullivan take a spade and dig up, with all his might, potatoes which were not yet fit for cropping. Dora found up sacks and turf-panniers, and Dan proceeded, as soon as twilight came on, to impress into his temporary service a horse which grazed in the neighbourhood. On this animal he packed the panniers, so as to afford a seat between them, and then commanded the trembling Dora to mount by his assistance. She clasped her hands, crying,

"O, Dan! where will you be for taking us in the dark night? You are over full of haste, I'm thinking, Dan."

His only reply was to lift her upon the horse.

"My mother!" cried Dora, weeping. "You will not leave her alone; and if my father stays without us, depend on it he will call in the neighbours."

Dan lifted her down again, went for the old woman (who had seemed stupified ever since the news came), placed her between the panniers, gruffly desired Dora to remain behind till her turn came, and began to lead the horse up the hill which stretched towards the sea-shore. Dora followed, however, at some distance, determined to see whither her mother was to be conducted. The horse was a grey one, which enabled her to keep within sight, and out of hearing, amidst the increasing darkness. It was a dreary walk, over four or five miles of boggy ground; and many times would she have called out for her husband's help, if she had not feared his present mood more than the stormy sky above and the treacherous soil beneath. Gusts of wind blew from the sea, piercing her with cold through her scanty raiment. Drenching showers were dashed in her face, blinding her so effectually for many minutes together, that she would have lost the track and have sunk yet deeper than she did in the bog, if the same cause had not obliged those whom she followed to stop also, and turn their backs for awhile to the storm. The fitful gale brought to her the feeble wailings of the old

woman, and the growlings of her impatient husband, who cursed heaven, earth, and hell, at every impediment to their progress. During one of their pauses on a ridge, over which the roaring of the sea rose more distinctly to their ears, Dora came closer upon them than she intended. The horse started, and his snort seemed to be answered from a distance by a cry. The old woman saw something waving near her, and screamed, and Dan himself shook with superstitious terror at the very moment that he swore another oath at those who were scared when the echoes were up and awake on a stormy night.

"The echoes *are* up and awake," said Dora, venturing round to her husband's side. "Take care, Dan, that they repeat nothing you would not have heaven hear."

As she expected, his anger was now turned on her, for risking her own life and her child's by so perilous a walk. She made no reply, but held by his arm till they arrived at their destination, thankful that he had slackened his pace and moderated his wrath somewhat, as if in consideration for her. They stopped on the extreme verge of the cliff when Dan desired his wife to hold the horse while he carried her mother home. She was not left for many minutes to conjecture what this home could be. Her husband led her down to a doorless and half-unroofed cabin, placed just so far below the verge of the cliff as to be unseen from the land. Having lodged both the women under shelter, Dan tried to strike a light with a flint and steel

he had brought with him; but as fast as the little rush candle was lit, it blew out again, there being no corner of the hovel free from draughts. There was nothing for it but to abide in wet, cold, and darkness, till dawn. The horse being unloaded, Dan mounted, and bidding the women expect Sullivan and himself before morning, set off again across the bog. Three hours afterwards they appeared with another horse, and a heavier load; and, to Dora's disappointment, her husband again left her, not saying this time when he should return. Sullivan expressed his belief that Dan's purpose was to spoil the place as much as possible before morning, and then to hide himself for a time in some such convenient sort of place as he hinted he had thoughts of betaking himself to the next day. No inquiries could get out of him what sort of place that was

Dora spent the rest of the night in mounting from the hut to the cliff, and descending from the cliff to the hut, trying to comfort her mother meanwhile, who lay moaning and peevishly complaining of manifold evils that it was impossible to remedy. Towards morning, it startled Dora on her watch to perceive a bright light burning in the direction of their late abode. She called Sullivan to look at it, who forthwith began to wave his hat, crying,

"Hilloo, hilloo! Dan is the boy in the world to deal with Flanagan. Hilloo! Dan, my darling, you've finished the job out of hand! 'Twill be as good as a year's rent to see the

agent overlook the place, let alone the tenant. It's burning—the cabin is, my jewel, and the turf-stack beside it; and it warms my heart at this distance!"

"And Dan—where is Dan, father?"

"O, the cratur, he'd just stop up the drain, and cut the pig's throat, and throw him into the bog, and see that everything that he couldn't bring with him is put in the way of the fire; and then he would set it alight, and creep off some roundabout way to us here."

This was exactly what took place: and the device was so much to the taste of most of the ejected tenants, that the example was followed to a great extent before a sufficient force could be summoned to check this destruction of property. For the next three nights, fires were visible here and there in the dark and dreary glen. As fast as the agent and his body-guard galloped from one point of watch to another, a blaze arose in their rear; and as soon as they arrived at the scene of destruction, the perpetrators had vanished, and it was too late to do any good. A mocking laugh came, from time to time, out of the darkness which surrounded the horsemen, in the intervals of the conflagrations; but this always happened on spots where the ground on either side the road was not of a kind to be attempted on horseback. In the morning, slain pigs, not in condition to be made food of, were found scattered on the road; houghed horses lay groaning about the fields; and many a poor cow was burned in its shed. The agent

was driven half frantic by these insults and injuries. He sent messenger after messenger for soldiers, called on Mr. Rosso, his sons, and tenants for assistance; and besides taking these necessary measures of defence, pointed out every cottier already ejected, or about to be so, as a criminal; exasperated every man he met by his insults; and rode against the women and overthrew the children as often as he passed a party of homeless wanderers, going they cared not whither, and to be kept alive they knew not how. It appeared so clear to the young Rossos that Flanagan was endangering his own life, and aggravating the evils of the time, by awakening the revengeful passions of the people, that one or other of them kept continually beside him, in order, by their presence, to impose a restraint upon him, and, by their mediation, to sooth the wounds he inflicted. They well knew that, by thus associating themselves with so obnoxious a person, they ran the risk of being hated by the people; but this risk they had courage to brave for a time in a good cause.

Alexander had taken his turn one day, when he rode up to join his father and brother, who had compassed a circuit of observation in a different direction, and were now returning home to refresh themselves before beginning their evening watch.

"Father," said Alexander, "do you mean to forbid your tenants to receive any of these ejected cottagers?"

"Certainly not: it is no affair of mine."

"So I thought; but Flanagan has not only been routing out some poor creatures from a barn of one of Tracey's tenants, but has taken upon him to declare that they must remove themselves out of the district, as they would be harboured neither by you nor any of the proprietors in it."

"What business has the fellow to answer for anybody but himself?" said Mr. Rosso. "However, the poor people know more of the matter than he does. They know that I am harbouring many,—as many, alas! as I can afford to relieve. Would this were all over, boys! Every case I hear of seems a harder one than the last; and it breaks one's heart to leave them to take their chance. See, from this very point, what melancholy groups of them:—aged parents, or helpless children, or weakly women in each, to be a burden upon the spirit-broken cottager!"

"Where will they go? What will become of them, father?"

"The greater part will crowd into the towns, and herd by hundreds under the same roof, till the fever sweeps half of them away. Others will stroll the country as beggars; and others will live by plunder. The most fortunate of them will be those who will beg enough in crossing the island to pay their way over the sea in search of English wages. The noblest in their natures, the brave and high-spirited, will become white-boys, and die amidst acts of outrage, or on the gibbet. So much for that policy of landlords, by which they first increase the numbers of their tenantry, in order, by force of competition, to

let their land high; and then, finding that they have gone too far, take a fit of consolidation, and make no provision for the crowd they called up around them, and now deprive of the means of subsistence. What think you of such policy, Henry?"

"I was just thinking, Sir, that it is rather surprising to me that you lift up your voice, on all occasions, against establishing poor-laws in Ireland, while you have such scenes as these before your eyes."

"While that question is pending, Sir," said Alexander,—"and it is a question which will not be speedily settled, and which, if settled in the affirmative, will bring tedious arrangements after it,—in the meanwhile, is not Tracey bound, by every merciful consideration, to give his ejected tenants dwellings elsewhere? Ought not each one of them now to have a slip of land on yonder mountain-side, and wherewith to build himself a cabin?"

"That would afford no present relief," observed Henry. "Besides having to build their cabins, the people must drain and manure their ground by a process of many months, before it will yield them the food they are this day in want of."

"Even supposing these new lots to be prepared before the ejectment was served," said Mr. Rosso, "the plan would be a bad one. It would secure a future repetition of precisely the same evils we are deploring to-day. Bad cultivation and over-population, through the too

extensive subdivision of land, are our grievances; and to remedy them, Alexander, you would begin afresh to divide and subdivide, and encourage the increase of numbers as before. This seems to me scarcely reasonable."

"But the poor-laws we were talking of, Sir," interrupted Henry; "do tell me how you can resist pleading for them. Tell me, if you please, that these poor people have been idle and improvident—tell me that they have brought families into the world without a prospect of maintaining them; but tell me whether such destitution as theirs is not a dreadful punishment for what are, after all, more faults than crimes. Look, too, at the number of innocent persons that suffer: the old, who lie down to die by the wayside after a life of toil; the infants, who expire of hunger on their mothers' breasts; the sickly, who, instead of being tended by careful hands, are shrinking and shivering in the wet and cold;—look at these wretches, in contrast with Tracey, living in luxury abroad, on funds wrung from the misery of his tenantry. . . ."

"Tracey is a benevolent man," interrupted Alexander; "he may be mistaken in the way in which he sets about improving the condition of his tenantry, and he may have chosen his agent badly; but he is far from being a hard-hearted man."

"True," replied Henry, "and all this makes for my argument. Levy a rate upon him, and he will no longer be insensible to what passes at home; the burden of relieving distress will no

longer fall wholly upon the charitable,—upon you, father, and your kindhearted tenants, who are giving up their barns for lodging, and rood after rood of their potato-grounds, for food for the destitute. O, father, when I see these things,—the calamity of the oppressed, the insensibility of the oppressor, the liabilities of the charitable, the exemption of the selfish and the avaricious, I cannot but cry out for the interposition of the strong arm of the law to rectify these monstrous abuses, by making charity compulsory."

"If the law could rectify these abuses, Henry, I would cry out with as loud a voice as you. It is because I am convinced that a legal charity would only aggravate them, that I advocate other methods of rectification. We all know that a permanent state of comfort depends on character. Do we not?"

"Certainly: we might give and give for ever to a set of depraved paupers, without any better result than impoverishing ourselves."

"True. Well; the mistake seems to me to lie in supposing that, as character and comfort are connected, we must produce character by giving comfort; whereas this is beginning at the wrong end; and the results have always been the direct reverse of what was expected. We must begin at the other end. . . ."

"But, my dear father, how long it must be before education can work. . . ."

"Remember, Henry, there is another kind of education always going forwards, besides that of our reading and writing schools—the educatior

of circumstances. By our present institutions, we educate our peasantry to indolence and improvidence; and by calling in poor-laws, we should only be appointing an additional teacher to enforce the same bad lessons. Instead of this, I would fain have institutions which should stimulate, instead of superseding industry,—which should cherish, instead of extinguishing true charity,—and ensure its due reward to prudence, instead of offering a premium to improvidence."

"I know the evils you speak of have grown out of the English pauper system; but must they, therefore, be inherent in every system of legal charity?"

"They must; because the supposition of a *right* to assistance is involved in the very notion of a legal provision; and herein lies the mischief. You will never improve character (which is the same as improving the external condition), while you separate character and its consequences,—while a right to support is accorded to any man, whether his conduct be wise or foolish, correct or profligate. Lay hold of a child, teach him effectually that industry and prudence are the means of comfort, and you put comfort within his reach. Take the profligate, or the reckless man, in his middle age, give him the means of comfort, and you will not give him character; he will presently be as poor as ever, and the more reckless for having received arbitrary assistance."

"The more arbitrary charity there is, the less natural will there be," said Alexander. "In

England, our peasantry are held in respect for their filial duty and neighbourly kindness;—too little known there, alas! except in the remote districts where the poor-laws have not yet shed their blight over the growth of kindly sympathies. Give us poor-laws, and here, too, the aged will be committed to the cold care of strangers, orphans will be without a home, and the maladies of the body will involve the soul-sickness of pauperism."

"Such is the fate of the helpless in England," said Mr. Rosso; "and their calamities are aggravated in precise proportion to the amount of legal relief provided. The most deplorable misery prevails in the southern counties, where the poor-rate is highest: the condition of the poor improves to the northward, where a dislike of this species of relief has been longer kept alive. There is still less distress in Scotland, where assessments for the poor are rare; and least of all where their condition is confided to voluntary charity. That the misery is as much the consequence as the cause of legal relief, is proved by the result of an experiment of abolishing a stated mode of relief. Pauperism was on the perpetual increase in a populous district under a system of assessment; the assessment was discontinued, and pauperism vanished. It was swept away by the current of human affections, as soon as they were restored to their natural channels."

"It seems rather absurd, to be sure," observed Alexander, "first to complain that the

misery about us arises from the obstructions imposed on human powers, and then to seek to remedy it by obstructing the current of human affections."

"But what, after all," inquired Henry, "have these human affections done? Whence comes all this misery, if they have been left free?"

"They have been rendered impotent by the force of bad institutions," replied his father; "they live and act, but are baulked of their natural rewards by the injustice of our economy, and the impolicy of our government. While industry is overloaded and foresight baffled, as at present, children may honour their parents, and the poor have compassion to one another, but they can yield little mutual support against indigence."

"It seems rather an injury to Ireland, brother," said Alexander, "to ask what its benevolent sympathies have done. Our public provision for lunacy and sickness, is greater than in England; and innumerable plans have been tried, at a great expense of capital and trouble, to lessen the amount of pauperism. That all have failed, betokens not a want of charity, but an overpowering counteraction from other quarters. If we look only at the Mendicity Associations, what vast sums have been raised by them as often as the increase of pauperism suggested to some the idea of a compulsory rate! All this voluntary charity would cease, as it has ceased elsewhere, upon the establishment of a poor rate."

"But, father, we ought to give more every

year as our resources increase; and they certainly are increasing on the whole."

"They are; and this is another reason for deprecating an institution which would swallow up all we have gained, and effectually prevent the further progress to improvement. The vast and increasing unproductive consumption which takes place wherever there is a poor-rate, would presently absorb our now growing capital, and repress the spirit of improvement which is beginning to stir among us. Let our capital be allowed to spread itself naturally; let more and more of the lower classes be encouraged to clothe themselves decently, to add a room to their cabin, to exchange a portion of their potato diet for oatmeal or bread; and far more will be done for the lowest class of all, than if the earnings of the industrious were directly applied to the maintenance of paupers. I see bakers' shops beginning to appear in many of our villages; and I regard them as an indication of growing prosperity. If, in their place, I were to see workhouses, or any part of the apparatus of a legal charity, I should regard it as an indication that a final and overwhelming curse had lighted upon the land."

"But, father, every poor-rate need not have the abuses of the English system. It is not an inherent necessity in a poor-rate, that it should grow in one century from five hundred thousand pounds to eight millions."

"No; but the principle of growth is inherent in the system, whether that growth be rapid or

slow; and the destruction of the country in which it is established becomes merely a question of time. The only way to get the better of it is, to annihilate it in time; and this being the case, it is mere folly to call it in for the relief of temporary evils."

"It seems to me," said Alexander, "that such a system would aggravate the very evils we want to remedy. It is for want of capital that the land is subdivided too far. If revenue is so far absorbed by a poor-rate as to check its conversion into capital, this subdivision will go on."

"Undoubtedly such would be the effect in our agricultural districts; and in the manufacturing towns the case would be as bad. Our linen-weavers would be a burden upon the rates in slack times, and their masters must encroach upon their wages-fund to support them; and thus the masters would be brought lower and lower, to the permanent injury of their men."

"I do not believe," observed Alexander, "that the thing could ever be done here. We have not the requisites. All have a nearly equal horror of an assessment; and I could name many parishes where there are none to manage the business, and many more where no one would undertake it."

"There would soon be an end of that difficulty," replied Mr. Rosso; "there are people enough ready to administer the fund for the sake of living upon it. We should have a new class of unproductive consumers introduced; and for

every one of them we should lose a hardy labourer, who would commit to them his aged parents and helpless little ones, and go to seek good wages in England. A poor exchange truly!"

"Do you complain of numbers, father, and yet object to the emigration of our poor?"

"To that of productive consumers who leave all the helpless members of their families upon our hands; and of this kind of emigration there would be a vast increase upon the establishment of a pauper system. The same influence which would supersede domestic charities, would dissolve domestic ties: and would not a legal relief be an irresistible temptation to a man to throw his burdens upon the public, and go to seek his fortune elsewhere? If it is done already while no legal provision exists, it would be done more extensively upon the establishment of such a provision."

"Well, then, Sir, what would you do? Something, I suppose."

"By all means. I would do much, and without loss of time, lest there should be many lives to answer for.—Till education can be made universal in Ireland, so that the interests of the people can be safely committed to their own guardianship, we must weather the evils which surround us, opposing peculiar methods of relief to their peculiar stress. We must consolidate our small farms. . . . ."

"O, father, look about you and see the consequences!"

"Hear me out, Henry. We must gradually

consolidate our farms, removing our ejected population, not to other small holdings in the neighbourhood, but to regions where population is the one thing deficient. The people are already making efforts, to do this for themselves, at a tremendous expense of hardship and danger. It should be done for them on a better plan by those who eject them, on the understanding that it is a temporary measure, caused by the new arrangement of landed property. The tenants who remain should be freed from the burden of supporting two religious establishments, from all interference between themselves and their landlords, from all impediments to the free exercise of their industry, and to the gradual accumulation of capital."

"Might not emigration remedy the worst evils of the poor-laws, father?"

"We cannot afford, Henry, to be for ever doing and undoing in any such way. To increase numbers by poor-laws and lessen them by emigration, would cost endless toil and expense, and leave our grievances untouched: but as a temporary measure, as a specific remedy for a specific grievance, nothing can be wiser, or, in our case, more necessary. Tracey meant to do a patriotic thing when he ordered the consolidation of this estate: the deed would have answered to the will, if he had done it more gradually, carefully providing a settlement in Canada or Australia for every family that he displaced."

"And why not on some of our waste tracts at home?"

"Because much capital is required to bring them into a productive state; while, in the case of emigration, the only cost incurred is that of transportation to a place where capital superabounds and labour is the one thing wanted."

"And this then, you think, opens a fair prospect of improvement."

"I do. If this plan be pursued in conjunction with the removal of the most galling of our political fetters, we may see Ireland the flourishing region nature intended her to be. If a pauper system be introduced instead, our case is hopeless. To use the words of one who well understands our maladies and their causes, 'its probable effect appears to me to be to fill Ireland with a population multiplying without forethought; impelled to labour principally by the fear of punishment; drawing allowance for their children, and throwing their parents on the parish; considering wages not a matter of contract but of right; attributing every evil to the injustice of their superiors; and, when their own idleness or improvidence has occasioned a fall of wages, avenging it by firing the dwellings, maiming the cattle, or murdering the persons of the landlords and overseers; combining, in short, the insubordination of the freeman with the sloth and recklessness of the slave.'"

Chapter IV.

IRISH CRIME.

The Sullivans and Mahonys were not immediately pursued. Dora watched by day and listened by night, in vain, for tokens of the approach of enemies, till she began to believe, as she was told, that the place of their retreat was not known; or, if known, was supposed to be so surrounded by a disaffected and desperate peasantry as to render any attack too perilous to be attempted. That this last supposition was true she had some reason to believe, though she knew little more than Mr. Flanagan himself what was passing around her. Her father disappeared the day after their arrival on the coast; but he had since looked in on them, twice at night and once early in the morning, which seemed to prove that his abode was not very distant from theirs. He brought with him each time a supply of whiskey for his sick wife, who was failing fast, and able to enjoy little besides a drop of spirits to warm her. These gifts, coupled with what Sullivan had let fall about what went on in the bog, led Dora to think that he had connected himself with an illicit distillery in the neighbourhood; but no confession could she get from him but eloquent gestures and significant snatches of song. Dan was yet more mysterious. His tenderness to his wife in great measure returned after the night of the flitting, but there was no confidence with it. He went and

came at all hours, never saying where he had been, or how long he should be absent; but always desiring her not to be uneasy, and showing that he thought of home during his excursions by bringing little comforts for her mother and herself, which she wondered how he could procure. Once he threw over her shoulders a cloak which was much less rent and tattered than her own; another time he produced a packet of tea for his mother-in-law; and with it a handsome teapot and cups nicely secured in straw: lastly appeared a piece of fine linen for the use of the expected baby. Dan expected very warm thanks for this, as he knew that Dora's great anxiety was on account of nothing being provided for her little one, who would too probably scarcely outlive its birth in circumstances of destitution: but Dora looked at her husband with anguish in her countenance, saying,

"O, husband, you would not doom your child before it is born! You will not wrap it about with crime as soon as it sees the light! This is not earned, Dan. It cannot be yours; and my child shall not be touched with that which is stolen.'

Dan, far from being angry, coolly observed that when there was an end of justice, there was an end of law. If he was cut off from earning what he wanted, he must take it where he could get it; and to take it thus was a less crime than to let his family die of hunger, and his child of cold, while food and clothing were within reach. In answer to his wife's timid questions what this

would avail him when the law was urged against him, and soldiers were dogging his heels, he laughed, and said that if the gentry brought the matter to that pass, he and others must fight for it. They had driven him out, and must not wonder if he did not come in again at their beck and call. If the orderlies chose to try their strength against the desperates, there should be a fair battle. He was ready to fight bravely or to swing merrily, according as the powers decreed the one party or the other to prevail.

Dan could not succeed in any degree in imparting his spirit of recklessness to his wife. She became more thoughtful as he grew less so: a deeper and deeper melancholy shaded her countenance. Her form wasted, her spirits were hurried, and she seemed unable to control her temper by other means than perfect silence. Instead of soothing her mother's complaints, and patiently answering her incessant questions, as formerly, she heard the former in silence, and escaped as often as possible from the latter. Her practice was to set within the old woman's reach whatever she was likely to want, and then wander out, sometimes sitting on a perilous projection of the cliff to watch the swell of the sea, and sometimes hiding herself in a cave immediately below the cabin; whence she would come forth occasionally, climb the cliff laboriously, peep in at the door stealthily, to see if she was wanted within, and creep down again to her place of idleness and solitude. Yet it would seem as if, even in this place, she heard her husband's step

from a distance, so invariably did she appear as he approached. At other times she came forth when it was not Dan moving over the bog, but some less welcome visitor; and then she turned back quickly and tried to evade observation. One woman, and another and another, came to visit her, she knew not whence nor why; but they were of a more companionable nature than herself, and gave broad hints that as their husbands or fathers or sons were united in enterprise, the women should be so in confidence; and would have told many a horrible tale of what was nightly done and daily suffered by the band they professed to belong to. Dora always stopped such communications at the outset; professing that Dan and she belonged to nobody and nobody to them, and that all she wished for was, to live alone and be left quiet. She did not so much as know where her visitors came from, she said. They pointed, some to the bog, some to the rocks, and others to little mounds of turf, from which a thin blue smoke was seen at times to curl up. Some hinted at an intention of building cabins on the cliff, near hers; to which she gave no encouragement. This kind of reception did not tempt them to repeat their visits very often, and after a short time, Dora flattered herself she had got rid of all intruders. She was not deceived. In a little while she was solitary enough.

It was a December night, wrapt in that kind of gloom which is as a stifling pall descending to shroud the world, when a vessel came ashore

almost directly below Dan's dwelling. How the accident happened, those on board were wholly ignorant. They had believed themselves acquainted with the coast, and felt themselves secure while the beacon glimmered south-east of them. It did, indeed, only glimmer; but the fog lay so thick, that the wonder was how the beacon could be seen at all. What wind there was blew directly on shore; so that it was too late, when the vessel was once among the breakers, to preserve her. She struck; and with the first cry uttered by her crew, the supposed beacon vanished. The shouts of the mariners rose at intervals amidst the hoarse music of the waves, which renewed their dirge with every human life that they swept away. All might have been saved if there had been a ray of light to guide their efforts; but, murky as it was, they struggled in vain, while wave upon wave, without a moment's pause, found them full of desperate effort, and left them less able to encounter its successor. The first man that gained a footing on the beach found himself unable to yield the slightest assistance to his companions, and looked about for signs of human habitation. The only token was a feeble gleam from Dan's cabin, towards which he directed his steps, not perfectly satisfied at first whether it was light from a dwelling on an eminence, or a star seen through an opening in the gloom. Tripping, stumbling, now climbing, now falling, but still shouting all the time, he pursued his way in a direct line to the light, fearing every moment that it would

vanish, like the supposed beacon, and leave him no choice but to sit down and wait on the spot for day. When he had drawn near enough to feel pretty secure of his object, his shout was suddenly answered by many voices, in immediate succession and from different distances; and moving lights at once appeared along the whole face of the cliff. A man started out from the darkness on either hand of the astonished sailor, and told him he was going the wrong way for assistance, there being none but women above. The sailor, on whom, being a foreigner, this information was lost, swore his deepest oaths at them for their delay, and for the artifice by which he suspected the vessel had been purposely brought on shore. His wrath, vented in unintelligible threats, was only laughed at.

"Be easy, now," said one. "Sure it takes a man a long time to wake with such a lullaby going on all the while."

"Sure a darker curtain was never about a sleeping man's head than this fog," observed another.

"The beacon!" exclaimed a third; "it's just the drop made you see double, that's all. The beacon is far away south, and yon cabin's the only light."

Their explanations were as much wasted as the foreigner's wrath; and after a prodigious expense of eloquence on both sides, recourse was had to action, the purport of which was presently intelligible enough. A shrill whistle set all the wandering lights converging towards

the beach: the sailor's two guides, whose outer garment was a shirt, bound round the waist with a hayband, in which pistols and knives were stuck, slung their lanterns to their belts, seized each an arm of the stranger, and led him rapidly down the cliff. Instead of permitting him to proceed towards the wreck, they ordered him into the cave whither Dora often resorted, and set a guard of two men over him. One after another, five of his companions were brought to join him, the guard being strengthened in proportion. When no more live men could be found about the wreck, a small supply of food and spirits, and materials for making a fire, were sent into the cave, as an intimation that all the business was over in which the crew was to have any share. The poor wretches, soaked, battered, exhausted in body, and harassed in mind with grief and panic, were not interfered with by their guards, except when their lamentations became dangerously audible.

The work of violence on the beach meanwhile went on rapidly: all that the vessel contained was seized, and put out of sight, and great part of the wreck broken up and carried away before morning. The aim of some of the people employed was the very amusing joke of persuading the foreigners, on bringing them out into the daylight, that their vessel had been conjured away bodily to a distant point, whither they were to be sent to seek it. These people were scarcely aware how some of their noisy operations were heard by the crew, and how well they

understood the knocking, heaving, and crashing, and especially the shouts which followed every grand achievement in the process of destruction.

Dan was among the plunderers. He was not at liberty to decline any enterprise proposed by the captain of the gang with which he had associated himself; and on his return from a distant expedition, which had detained him from his home for some days, he found himself called upon, in fulfilment of his oath, to take part in a scene of plunder, of a kind which he abhorred, in sight of his own dwelling. While he was ordered to rob middlemen, terrify agents, and half-murder tithe-proctors, he discharged his mission with hearty goodwill, under the notion of avenging his own wrongs: but it was quite a different thing to delude foreigners, put them in peril of their lives, and strip them of everything; and he said so. In reply, he was reminded of his oath (an oath too solemn to be slighted), and immediately commanded, as a test of obedience, to take up a bale of goods from the wreck, and carry it up to find houseroom in his cabin. He did so with a heavy heart, dreading thus to meet Dora, after a separation of some days. She had never yet seen him equipped as a whiteboy, or been expressly told what occupation he followed.

He paused outside, leaning against the doorless entrance to watch what was passing within. All was so strange and fearful, that a deadly horror came over him, lest the one whom he saw moving about should not be the real Dora, but

some spirit in her likeness. She was employed about her mother's corpse, which lay on the bare ground. Her motions were so rapid as to appear almost convulsive. Now she kneeled beside the body, straightening the limbs, and striving in vain to cover it completely with a piece of linen which was too small for the purpose, now she fixed her one rush-light in a lump of clay, and placed it at the head; now she muttered from beneath the hair which fell over her face as she stooped; and then, leaning back, uttered the shrill funeral cry with a vehemence which brought some colour back to her ashy pale countenance.

"Whisht, whisht!" muttered she impatiently to herself. "I have given the cry, and nobody comes. Father Glenny forgot me long ago, and my own father has forgot us, and Dan——I don't know what has been done to Dan, and he tells nobody. He won't forget me long, however."

"Forget you, Dora!" said Dan, gently, as he laid hold of her cloak. "Did I keep my oath so long when you lived in your father's cabin in the glen, and shall I forget you now?"

She folded her arms in her cloak with a look of indifference, as she glanced at the bale he carried.

"O, you have brought a sheet, as I was wanting," said she; "but where are the candles? I have but this one; and nothing in the way of a shutter or a door, you see; and there's no com-

pany come yet; so you will have time. Make haste, Dan."

"Shall I bid the neighbours to the wake?' inquired Dan, who thought the best way of gaining her attention was to help her to fulfil first the duties to the dead, which rank so high among social obligations in Ireland.

At a sign from her he threw down his load and hastened to the beach, whence he brought a plank, on which to lay the body, candles wherewith to illuminate the bier, and spirits with which to exercise hospitality. He gave notice, at the same time, to his captain and comrades, that when a blaze should be seen on the cliff, and the funeral lament heard, all would be ready for their reception at the wake:—the burning of the bed of the deceased before the door, and the utterance of the death cry, being the customary mode of invitation to the wakes of the Irish poor.

Dan was yet more struck with the deathlike paleness of his wife's face when he again joined her. He inquired whether any neighbours had helped her to nurse her mother, and whether her rest had been much broken: but she scarcely attended to his questions. She clapped her hands, as if in glee, at sight of what he brought, and seemed altogether so much more like a wilful child, than like his thoughtful and devoted Dora, that the fancy again crossed him that some mocking fiend had taken possession of her form. He asked her, with much internal trembling, whether she had duly prayed this night?

She started, and said she had strangely forgotten herself; and forthwith went through her customary devotions in a way which, though hurried, was very unlike any which a fiend would dare to attempt; and Dan was so far satisfied.

"Bring out the bed," said she, pointing to the straw on which her mother had been wont to lie. "While it is burning, I will raise the cry once more, and see if any one will come."

Dan moved a bundle which lay on the straw, but let it go again in a pang of horror when the feeble cry of an infant proceeded from it. In an instant he understood all. He took up the child, and placed it on Dora's bosom without saying a word.

"O, my child: aye, I forgot it when I forgot my prayers; but it cannot have been hungry long, I'm thinking. Hold him while I strip off my cloak that keeps me as hot as if I had a fire burning within me." And she carelessly slipped the babe into her husband's arms.

"O Dora!" cried he in a choking voice, "is this the way you give a child of ours into my arms for the first time?"

She looked at him with perplexity in her countenance, said she knew nothing at all about it, and before he could prevent her, set fire to the straw, and gave the other appointed signal. Up came the company of whiteboys, crowding round the cabin, rushing to the bier, and exciting Dora more and more every moment by their looks and their proceedings. She now, for the first time, perceived the peculiarity of her husband's dress.

She went from one to another, observing upon the arms they carried, and stopped at last before Dan, who was in earnest conversation with his captain.

"So you have enrolled yourself, Dan! So you have plighted and pledged yourself to your band since you swore you would wed me only. Much may they do for you that I could not do! but O, may they never do you the evil that I would not do! They may give you clothes these winter nights, when I have nothing warmer at home for you than my own heart. They may find you whiskey and lights for the wake, and other things as you want them; but they will make you pay more than you ever paid to me, Dan. They will take you among snares in the night: they will set you on other men's beasts to go over bogs where you will sink, and under rocks that will crush you: they will set you where bullets are flying round you; they will put a knife in your hand and make you dip your soul in blood. If you refuse, they will burn you and me together within four walls; and if you agree, they will lead you on to something worse than bogs or rocks, or a soldier's shot: they will send you to be set before the judge, and refused mercy, and then. . . ."

"For Christ's sake stop her!" exclaimed Dan. He seized her hands to prevent her stripping his white-boy uniform from his shoulders, as soon as he had given his baby in charge to a compassionate by-stander.

"Move the corpse," ordered the captain. "Keep

the wake down below, and bring the first woman you can meet with, to tend this poor creature. Clear the cabin instantly."

"Give the word, captain," cried one, "and we'll catch a doctor,—the same that we brought blindfold when O'Leary was murthered almost. We'll whip up horses, and have him here and home by noon."

"No, no; not till we see what the women say. Hilloo, boys! bring out the bier, fair and easy, and decent."

Dora's struggles to follow were fierce, and her cries at being kept from this duty heart-rending. No one could effectually quiet her till she had been some hours committed to the care of a matron, who was brought from some invisible place to nurse her.

Slowly and sadly she recovered. Some said she was never again the same Dora; but others saw no further change than the melancholy which was likely to become fixed in her by such an experience as her's. She could never recall any circumstances connected with the death of her mother and the birth of her child. She could only suppose, as her husband did, that the old woman's exertions had sufficed for her daughter, and been fatal to herself.

Sullivan made his appearance ere long from underground, where he had been engaged in breaking the laws after his own method. He was duly grieved at having been absent from the burial of his wife; but hoped to atone for the involuntary neglect, by devoting his gains at the still to the purchase of masses for her soul.

Chapter V.

IRISH RETRIBUTION.

It was not possible that the acts of outrage, of which the whiteboys from Tracey's estate and others were guilty, should remain long unnoticed by the officers of the law. The foreigners, who had been deprived of their wrecked vessel, had been, the next morning, tied two and two, and conducted into the neighbourhood of a road, by which they might reach a town, and relate their hardships. Three of their number were missing, and they did not fail to attribute their disappearance to those who had done all the other mischief. As they went along the road, and through small villages, they met with little sympathy in any of their complaints against whiteboys; but the townspeople were of a different temper, and Ballina and Killala soon rang with the tidings of the horrible outrage which had been committed on the coast. The alarm spread through the whole district. There was, daily, news of intended attacks, which never took place; exaggerated reports of the numbers of the disaffected, and of their deeds, got abroad; and many a dweller in a lone house, many an oppressor with an unquiet conscience,—all who had wealth in their houses, and all who suspected that they had enemies abroad,—trembled, as often as the long winter nights settled down, whether in starless gloom, or upon tracts of

moon-lit snow. The rovers did not fail to make use of the panic, while it lasted, to punish their enemies, and beat up for recruits among their friends. Opposition gave way before them in every direction; and many and various were the tokens of welcome they met wherever the population had tasted of oppression, or were struggling with hardship. The immediate occasion of the first check they encountered was an insult offered to an obnoxious landed proprietor,—an insult which roused him from fireside declamation to military action. His finest trees, some of which had ornamented the lawn of his mansion for an untold length of time, had been cut down in one night. He had looked westward the preceding evening, and seen the red sun tinge the tufts of snow that rested on their branchy heads; he looked again in the morning, and they lay like so many monuments of the grandeur that had been. He galloped off after breakfast in search of brother magistrates, soldiers, informers, guides, and all that was necessary for dislodging the enemy from their entrenchments. He would not wait till his usual body-guard had assembled, but ventured out with only a groom behind him. He had long suspected that some of his enemies were no further entrenched than in their own discretion, and that they were living and moving on all sides of him. He was now sure of it, from the ambiguous greeting which met him on all sides. He never remembered so many inquiries as to how all went on at the Hall, and such tender concern

about his honour's rest o' nights, and so many remarks upon the marvellous darkness of the preceding night. He perceived signals pass across the road, before and behind him,—thought he detected hidings behind the fences,—was sure that an ominous whoop travelled over the bog westward,—and that more than one gossoon only waited till the horses were past, to begin an expedition in the same direction.

It was indeed the case, as usual, that instant tidings were conveyed of the motions of those who had been recently injured. Mr. Connor's departure from home, his application to this magistrate, and consultation with that, and the grand letter which his groom was seen to put into his bosom and to ride off with in the midst of an escort, and the other letter carried to the post-office, which looked just like it, were all faithfully reported of to Dan's captain, in time to have the express turned back without his dispatch, and the next mail stopped, in order to rifle the letter-bag. These expedients, however, could not long avail. Soldiers were at length known to be on the way, and suitable preparations were made for their reception. In one of the most important of these, Dora bore a principal part.

Her husband, whose absences had been shorter and less frequent, until he saw that she was perfectly recovered and able to occupy herself with her infant, but were now again lengthening, came to her one night, and, gently waking her, told her that her services were wanted by

himself, and three or four companions who were waiting outside.

"Troth, then, my jewel," said he, "there's no need to be trembling and staring as if we were about carrying you off. You are not going out of this; and the whole matter is nothing in life but writing a slip of a letter, my darling, because it's you that will be doing it neat and pretty."

One of the party brought paper, pen, and ink, and as soon as Dora could steady her hand sufficiently, she wrote to her husband's dictation, subject to the suggestions of his companions:—

"Major Greaves,

"Come no farther nor the big elms in Rosso's demesne, or it will be the worse for yourself and them you bring. What you come to ask us for is a trifle that gentlemen should not be thinking of asking of poor men, even if the ship was a ship still, which it is not, never having been more than an awkward boat, and that now burnt and gone entirely, so as not to be given up, except the arms, which will be offered in a different way from that you expect, if a man of you sets foot beyond the elms. Take heed to the ground, sir, which is mostly such as would bog a snipe, and you without a guide that may be trusted; for there's not a boy in the glen that would do your honour the ill turn to bring you here. There are eels in the bog, sir, that slide easy out of the hand when you would take them; and your honour will find we take after the eels,

except that you will be much the worse of not taking us,—being taken yourselves. One word more out of kindness.—No enemy ever sets foot out of this place more, barring he takes us as his prisoners, which not a man of us will ever be: so, unless you come to pick and choose a grave for every man of you, stir not a step farther than the big elms, near which one will meet you with this."

Having amused themselves with inventing gibberish for the signature, and making rude drawings below of guns, pikes, and gibbets, ornamented with shamrock, the letter was folded, neat and pretty, and confided to one of the party, to be forwarded. Dan wondered that Dora made no remonstrance against being involved in such a proceeding; and, for a moment, suspected her of the weakness of being flattered, by the compliments paid to her writing, into a disregard of what it was that she had written: but Dora's passiveness arose from a sense of the uselessness of opposition, as far as the letter was concerned, and of its injurious influence on her domestic state. She would give Dan no shadow of a reason for leaving his home as he did. Her groan, when he kissed her and bade her farewell, on the letter being finished, went to his heart. He told her that it was for her sake, as well as for duty, that he must leave her, the boys being now on the look out to keep the enemy at a distance. He came back to whisper that, in case of real difficulty, she might be easy about him-

self and her father, as each man had a hiding place in the bog, theirs being below a certain stunted alder-bush, which she well knew.

From this hour, the sole employment of Dora, when not engaged within with her infant, was to sit with her eyes fixed upon this alder bush. No news came to her of the proceedings either of her people or of the enemy; but as long as she saw no sign from the appointed place, she knew that matters were not desperate. In frost or in fog, in sunshine and in rain, Dora sat abroad or paced along the ridge above her cabin, bending her gaze till she grew dizzy upon the black turf around the alder bush. There was not a tuft of moss, nor a twig, nor a rush, that was not presently as familiar to her as if she had planted them all. Every evening, as it became dusk, she drew nearer and nearer to the place, and, when it was quite dark, sat on the very spot as long as her child could spare her. Every morning, she devised some apparent reason, in case of curious eyes looking on, for making a circuit of the alder bush; and returned with a somewhat lightened heart, when she found no indication of any one being there.

This painful watching could not go on for ever, though Dora began to think it would. Some one at last appeared to be moving in that direction through the dusk of a foggy morning, now ducking and vanishing, now crawling among the uneven ground, now cautiously raising himself and looking about him. After vanishing near

the alder, he appeared no more. Dora proceeded thither, and found her father.

"Where is Dan?" was her first question. Somewhere near, her father told her, but too busy to seek a hiding at present. It was only the old and helpless who were thus allowed to get out of the way; all who could fight, were out against the soldiers. Dan meant to come to her by the coast way this day, if possible, just to tell her what he was about.

Sullivan had provided himself with a supply of his own manufacture; but he had no food. Dora hastened to bring him some while it was still dusk, and she promised more at night, in case of his being unable to leave his hiding place before that time. Sullivan joked on the chances of an old man's keeping soul and body together in such a place for twelve hours, and promised to thank her heartily for food and warmth at night, barring he was dead. He bade her not be scared at the soldiers if they should cross-examine her this day; she was not his own daughter, he declared, if she could not delude the ruffians, and save her own kith and kin at their expense. Dora retired home to watch more nervously than ever, since she was listening for her husband's footstep from below; and to meditate on the entanglements of these her kith and kin. Her father had broken the law in the matter of the distillery, and her husband was under ban for burning his late dwelling, for his share in the robbery of the wreck, and probably for many more feats of

whiteboyism, of which she had yet heard nothing. Her own liabilities she did not for a moment remember; yet the act of writing a threatening letter was uniformly punished very severely, whenever the perpetrators could be discovered. She stood in nearly as much jeopardy as her husband; and he knew it; and the purpose of his intended visit of this day was to convey her to a hiding. Her father was not aware of what she had done, and therefore thought no more than herself of her being in any danger.

How often since being involved in these troubles had she sighed for an opportunity of confession! It was long since she had eased her conscience; and she felt it among the greatest of the sins the family had committed, that they had cut themselves off from the services of devotion, and what she thought the means of repentance. Again and again, in her solitude, she had meditated a night expedition to Father Glenny's dwelling; but it was a step she dared not take without Dan's approbation; and he always put her off without an express permission. At this crisis she was more than ever distressed at her own spiritual state, and said to herself that her mind was so perplexed by her long solitude, and her conscience so burdened with an accumulation of sins, that she was not equal to what she might have to go through. Her ingenuity and presence of mind were gone, and she felt that, at the first question, she should betray either her conscience or her cause; that is, that she should either tell a direct lie or the plain truth, instead of being

able to baffle and mislead, as she had been taught it was meritorious to do, on such an occasion. She had not much time to ponder her case.

As soon as the fogs began to disperse before the risen sun, she saw a glancing and gleaming on the extreme point of the track which led from the glen into this district. It was the glittering of the arms of a strong party of soldiers, who were accompanied by several horsemen in plain clothes, probably some of the neighbouring gentry who had offered their services as guides ; none of the country people having being found trustworthy in the office. Dora's heart beat thicker and thicker as she traced them among the windings of the bog road. Presently they stopped at a cross track, and separated into three parties, as if more for purposes of search than battle. One of these parties, the smallest, seemed to receive directions from the gentry as to the course they should pursue, and then turned directly towards the alder-bush. Folding her arms forcibly on her bosom, to keep down her agitation, she stood conspicuous on the ridge of the cliff, hoping to draw their attention to herself. They looked about them at every step; but not more keenly when alongside the alder-bush than before. They passed it, and one pang was over. They came rapidly towards her, and she turned to enter the cabin. They shouted: she stopped, and awaited them with every appearance of willingness, gazing at the officer and his six soldiers as a child gazes at a show.

"Where do you live, my good woman?" inquired the officer. She pointed to the cabin.

"Who lives with you?"

"My child. My mother did live here too, but she died many weeks ago."

"And your father?"

"I had a father too, your honour: but he is in the ground. Soft may the rain fall, and warm may the sun shine on the turf that hides him!"

"Is not your name Dora Mahony? I was told your father was alive, and engaged in some unlawful doings hereabouts."

"He told me nothing of the nature of his doings, and it is not from strangers that I wish to learn them, when he is not here to speak for himself. Keep what you have to say against him till the judgment day."

"How long has your father been dead? We know he left the glen with you."

"He was hid from the light of day before my mother shut her eyes upon it for ever. One of my griefs was, that he was not here to wake her. O, it went to my heart to lay her out with my own hands, and none to help: and I raised the cry many times, and no one came. How should they in such a lonesome place?"

"Where was your husband, Dora? It was not being a good husband to leave you at such a time."

"It was before that, that he left me, and he knew nothing of my state. Far, far away he was before my mother breathed her last blessing on him; if a blessing she had for him,

which is just what, with many other things, I have no memory of, your honour. I was crazed with grief, I suppose, for my husband having left me; and all is lost and gone belonging to that time, but the crying and crying on the cliff, and nobody coming."

She was next questioned about the shipwreck; and here she was safe. She knew nothing of the matter but by hearsay, and could not answer a single question. Then came inquiries whither her husband had gone. She did not know; from place to place, she supposed, as he did before he married. It was a sore temptation to a man to leave a wife when he was turned out of his tenantcy into a pesert like this, while he knew that there were work and wages to be got elsewhere.—When did she expect her husband back, and how was she living in the mean time?—As for the living, it had been off the provision of potatoes they brought with them; but it was nearly gone, and she did not know what to look to next. She had thought many a night and day of seeking out Father Glenny and some of her old neighbours; but the fear lest her husband should come back and miss her, weighed with her to stay where she was. As to when that return would be, many was the morn when she said to herself, as she did this morn, that he would come before the sun went down; but the sun staid for none, and solitary it ever left her, as solitary it found her. They might as well ask her child about it as her,—the child that was now crying for her in the cabin, and she must go to it.

As she turned, she found herself intercepted by two soldiers, who barred her entrance. A third went in and brought her baby to her. She smiled, and said she did not object to being kept out of her own cabin as long as the sky was fair overhead.

"Will you take a solemn oath," asked the officer, "that your husband is not concealed within, or in the neighbourhood? and will you deliver up arms and whatever else may belong to him that is in your keeping?"

Dora declared that she feared an oath too much to swear that her husband was not in any place near, when she did not know where on the face of God's earth he was. She would swear that he was not in the cabin, nor any arms or other things of his, unless it might be any article of clothing left behind. She would swear that she did not know whether he was north, south, east, or west at that moment. This was thought satisfactory, and she took the oath deliberately, looking the officer full in the face as she spoke. This done, the soldiers were ordered to search the cabin, and Dora sat down on the ridge to hush her baby to sleep, and catch opportunities of throwing hasty glances down to the beach.—Before many minutes were over, the searchers re-appeared, bringing with them a dozen pikes, a blunderbuss, and three brace of pistols.

"You brought them in yourselves," said Dora calmly. "There were none there before, to my knowledge."

"Come, come, mistress," said the officer;

"no more speeches. A false oath is enough for one morning's work, and more than you will be able easily to answer for. You must come with us and take your trial for perjury."

Dora declared with such an appearance of innocence that she neither knew of these arms nor could imagine how they came there, and inquired so naturally whereabouts they were found, that the officer appeared to be moved. He asked whether she would furnish him with a written promise to appear when called upon, to give her account of the matter to a magistrate, to save the trouble of carrying her with them this day. The simple Dora, delighted with so easy a way of escape, and suspecting no artifice, wrote the required promise in the officer's pocket-book. As soon as she had done, he took out a letter and compared the hands. "Seize her," said he to a soldier beside her: "she is our prisoner."

"Prisoner!" repeated Dora, falteringly.

"On two charges," continued the officer, "one of perjury, on account of the oath you took just now; and the other of writing a threatening letter to Major Greaves."

Perceiving that some whispering was going on among his men, the officer observed that the crime of perjury was so much on the increase in Ireland, as to make it necessary to prosecute it with the utmost severity. The convictions for perjury in Ireland were double the number in England, and very many more who had been undoubtedly guilty had hitherto escaped. In the present state of the country, justice could no

have its course while the people were apt to swear falsely; and every instance of such swearing must therefore be punished.

"What is it that drives the people to swear falsely?" cried Dora. "You first teach them to take the holy name in vain by offering oaths that they understand no more than this babe of mine. There are oaths to the guager, and oaths at the fair and the market, and oaths at elections, that have no meaning at all to those that take them; and the blessed book is tossed about as if there was no more in it than old ballads. But when you have driven us from our homes, and taken from us all the bread but that which comes by crime,—when you have dug a pit under our feet, and thrown a halter over our necks, and made our hearts sick, and our spirits weary, and our consciences careless of what is gone and what is to come,—when you hunt our husbands and fathers and brothers till there is but one resting-place for the sole of their feet,—then you expect us of a sudden to fear an oath, and to point out the one hiding-place, and to deliver them up to be hanged in the midst of a gaping crowd. This is the way you make it a crime to love one another as God made our hearts to love. This is the way you breed hatred to the law, and then murder us for hating it. This is the way you mock God's truth, and then pretend to be jealous for it. This is what you call the course of justice. It is such a crooked course, that you will surely lose yourselves in it one day."

"If you threaten me, Dora, by words, as you

threatened Major Greaves by letter, there will be another charge against you."

"And what are my threats?" replied she, smiling bitterly. "You may take me and murder me by law or otherwise, and there will be none that can call you to account, unless it be Father Glenny. You will outlive yonder sun if your life waits on my threats."

The officer was not so sure of this when he saw how earnestly she glanced from time to time towards some particular spot in an opposite direction from the alder bush. It was an artifice; for Dora now began to be cunning, and to wish an end to this visit, lest her husband should appear from the beach. To various inquiries respecting tracks in the direction in which she was looking, she replied by asking, had they not better go back the way they came, since they knew that to be safe? By equivocating, hesitating, and giving ambiguous answers, she effected her purpose of determining the party to cross the most perilous part of the bog, where, if not lost, they would be disabled for further active service this day. A soldier was left to guard her till their return. As he ordered her into the cabin, and the rest rode away, her heart smote her as if she had their blood to answer for. She rushed out to call them back, but was only ridiculed for what was supposed to be her last device.

"I did not speak the word; I did not point the way," muttered she to herself. "They can witness against the devil himself that I called them back, and they would not come. But, O!

when shall I see Father Glenny? If he was here, he would tell me how much I may venture as a woman, because I am a wife and a daughter."

Still she felt as if murder was on her soul, and her trouble of spirit showed itself in the hurry of what she did. She picked a hole in the mud wall of her cabin, since her guard would not allow her to watch from without the proceedings of the party. While thus engaged, she argued within herself (like thousands of her countrymen before her) the necessity of doing evil that good might come; the expediency of betraying the agents of the law, to avoid treachery to the nearest and dearest; the duty of sacrificing enemies in order to preserve those on whom the heart's love rests. Alas! for those who have taught any thus to reason!

When she had made a chink large enough for her purpose, she saw that the party had separated a little in order to traverse more safely the boggy tract before them. Each, however, appeared shortly to be sinking, sinking;—and from a distance came their faint shouts to one another;—and the efforts to rein up and direct the struggling horses were seen. The conviction that her scheme was succeeding,—or, as she afterwards said, the devil in actual presence,—gave her courage to look on and act. Presently she stole to the doorway to reconnoitre her guard. He was standing with his back to the sea, watching his party, and as if spasm-struck at their manifest danger. Dora sprang at him like a tiger-

cat upon her prey. She hoped to throw him down the cliff. At the first moment, she had nearly succeeded; but he recovered his hold of her while tottering on the verge, grappled strongly with her for a few moments, and then mastered her failing strength. He was in a tremendous passion at her for her momentary advantage over him, and showing it in other ways besides oaths and foul names. He tied her hands painfully behind her, and kicked her into the hut again. The utmost mercy she could obtain after a time, was having her bonds transferred to her feet, for her infant's sake. When this was done, her guard told her to look through the chink, and see what was coming. She thanked heaven aloud when she saw the party returning, bemired and exhausted, but undiminished in number.

"Why there, now," said her guard; "there's your Irish hypocrisy again! You thank God that they are out of the bog, when you know you would have them all sunk to the bottom of it this minute, if you could. And you are the people that call yourselves generous enemies!"

"I, for one, was not given to enmity till I was driven to it," said Dora.

When the discomfited party arrived, the prisoner, with her infant in her arms, was mounted behind a soldier, and carried off to jail. While passing the alder-bush, she was in an agony lest her father should leap out in her defence. She carefully avoided looking that way and speaking, while they were within hearing of the place

Sullivan saw her pass; but aware of the *hope*lessness of resistance, adopted the wiser course of remaining where he was to inform Dan of her fate; thus sparing the husband the misery, —alas! too well known to some of his companions,—of finding his house empty, and no intimation why or whither his family had departed.

During her somewhat long and very toilsome journey, Dora had no other consolatory thought than that Dan had not come home this dreadful morning.

Chapter VI.

IRISH RESPONSIBILITY.

Mr. Tracey and his family returned from France about this time, in consequence of the passing of the Relief Bill. He had found, like many other gentlemen of station and fortune, that the disabilities under which he laboured on account of his religious belief, were too galling to be borne in the presence of those who were ready on all occasions to taunt him with his incapacity; and, like many other gentlemen, he returned, as soon as established in his civil rights, to discharge the offices which he had committed to others during his absence, or from which he had hitherto been excluded.

He was shocked and terrified at the aspect of

his estate and of the neighbouring country. When he gave orders for the consolidation of the small farms, he imagined that he had done all that was necessary to secure the prosperity of his tenantry; and as Mr. Flanagan had not troubled him with any complaints from the ejected, he supposed all had gone right as far as he was concerned, and that the troubles in the neighbourhood, of which report spoke, had an origin for which he was in no way responsible. When he found that the disaffected were those from whose hands he had wrenched the means of subsistence, and that his remaining tenantry dared not for their lives enter upon the new farms,—when he heard of the acts of malice and depredation which had been committed, of the lives lost, of the prisoners taken, of the utter destruction of confidence between the upper class and the lower in his neighbourhood, and remembered how large a share he had had in doing all this mischief,—his first impulse was to go abroad again, and get out of sight of his own work: but his friend, Mr. Rosso, roused him to a better course.

The first thing to be done was to find subsistence for those who had been ejected. To settle them as before would have been mending the case but little. The great evil of over-population was to be guarded against, at all events. Mr. Tracey could not afford to give these people the means of emigrating with advantage; but it appeared to himself and his friend that if he afforded them the opportunity of earning these

means, without taking work out of the hands of any already employed, he would be making the best atonement now possible for the errors of his management. This might be done by beginning some work which would improve the estate; and there was little difficulty in deciding what this work should be. A certain fishing village lay at a short distance from the southern extremity of Mr. Tracey's estate; but from the state of an intervening piece of land, little or no communication was held between this village and any of the places which lay to the north or east of it. This piece of ground was level, and almost perpetually overflowed, at some seasons by the tide, and at others by land springs. During a hot summer, the health of those who lived within a certain distance was affected by the taint the marsh gave to the atmosphere; and by reason of the manifold evils which might be referred to this slip of land, it had obtained the name of the Devil's Garden. It had long been settled that a sea wall of small extent, and a road and ditch would put an end to the fever, would establish an advantageous communication with the village, and probably convert this desert tract into good land: but the consent of a neighbour or two had not yet been obtained, because not asked in earnest.

Mr. Tracey now asked in earnest and obtained. In a short time his purpose was made known, and candidates for emigration (to whom the offer of employment was confined) dropped in from all quarters, and established their claim as old

tenants or labourers on Mr. Tracey's estate. No questions were asked as to their mode of subsistence during their disappearance. The object was to win as many as possible from a life of violence to one of hopeful industry, and this object was gradually attained. Less was heard of crime and punishment, week by week; and at length Mr. Tracey had the satisfaction of knowing that several individuals among these labourers had resisted various inducements both of promises and threats to become whiteboys.

"What is the meaning of their tickets?" inquired Mr. Rosso, one evening, when the people went to the paymaster on leaving work, and Mr. Tracey and his friend stood by to observe the proceeding.

"These tickets are certificates of a day's work being done. The men carry them to the clerk yonder, who pays them what they absolutely want for present subsistence, and places the rest to their account in the emigration list. They are getting on in the world, I assure you, by this plan; and seem in a fair way to emigrate in a better condition than our poor countrymen usually do."

"What, while earning only tenpence a day?"

"Yes; you must remember that if these wages are less than half what would be earned in England at the same employment, the people may live for as much less in proportion. A man who earns six shillings a week here is as well off, in his own opinion, as one who gains fifteen shillings a week in England. An English

labourer would find it impossible to leave any part of his daily tenpence in his landlord's hands; but a friend of mine, who gave no more, was paid 4000*l.* of arrears by his tenants, when he set them to work on improvements of great magnitude on his estate. My project of enabling these people to emigrate, seems nothing in comparison to his."

"What a pity it seems, Tracey, that our people should emigrate when there is so much to be done at home,—so many bogs to be drained,—so much fertile land to be tilled! But so it must be. We want capital; and though our capital is growing, we must limit the demands upon it before we can materially improve the condition of the people."

"True," replied Mr. Tracey; "some of them will do better abroad till we have learned to manage our resources more wisely. We may talk as we please about the fertility of our waste lands, and the facilities for draining our bogs; these cannot be made productive without capital; and we have not capital to spare for such purposes, while the present enormous demands are made upon the subsistence fund by our overgrown population."

"If the deficiency be of capital, Tracey, what think you of those who carry Irish capital abroad? What think you of the patriotism of absentees? if one who has till now been an absentee will tolerate such a question."

"I think that an Irishman who loves his country will do all he can to promote the increase

and judicious application of capital in it: but this has nothing to do with the common question of absenteeism. Our absentees do not usually apply capital, but spend revenue in other countries; which alters the question entirely; it being perfectly immaterial in point of wealth to Ireland whether her landlords are supported by Irish produce abroad or at home."

"Aye; I have heard that this was your plea for living abroad so long."

"It was an opinion which satisfied my conscience in remaining abroad when I was driven there by evils which are now remedied. If I had not been satisfied that it is an error to suppose that a country is impoverished in proportion to the absence of its landlords, I would have borne my exclusion from all offices but that of subsheriff, and the obloquy with which our Protestant gentry are apt to treat us true Irish, rather than budge a step to the injury of the people. I am speaking now of a landlord's economical, not his moral influence, you are aware."

"Certainly. The moral effect of a landlord's residence depends much on the man and his way of life. If he is a profligate, or brings down profligates in his service into the country, he may do a world of harm; and the contrary, if he and his household bear an opposite character. A really good agent, too, may exert as favourable a moral influence as a good landlord; and as for what a bad one can do, we need but look round and see what are the results of Flanagan's administration. But, in an economical point of

view, do you suppose that the entire difference between doing harm and no harm by absenteeism consists in applying capital and spending revenue?"

"I do, as regards the whole of Ireland. See now. My agent collects my rents: shall we say in raw produce, or in money?"

"Both: raw produce first."

"Very well. He sends me over to Paris five hundred head of cattle, which I exchange for French produce to be consumed within the year. Now, how does it matter to Ireland whether I exchange these cattle for something of the same value to be consumed there, or whether I consume the cattle at Paris?"

"It cannot matter at all. If Ireland kept the cattle, she would have the same amount less of something else."

"To be sure. I am still living on Irish produce, whether at Paris or in this glen. With a money-rent the case would be precisely the same. If I remained at home, Ireland would have more money and less of the money's worth."

"That is clear enough. But how would it be if you fixed your revenue, instead of immediately consuming it?"

"If I consumed only a part of my revenue and employed the rest in setting up a manufactory, Ireland would remain in the same state as if I consumed the whole; and in a worse state than if I set up my manufactory within her borders. If I withdrew any of my capital from her to support my manufactory abroad, I should inflict on

her a positive injury. But absentees never do this. When Irishmen invest capital abroad, it is as emigrants, not as absentees."

"Suppose, instead of setting up a manufactory, you built a mansion in France, how would the case stand then?"

"The mansion would be Irish property; erected with Irish funds, consumed (as long as it deteriorated) by an Irishman, and the remaining value to revert to Ireland at my death or at its sale."

"But supposing it to be let to French tenants for ever."

"Then it would be an investment of capital, and cease to bear any relation to the question of absenteeism."

"True, true. But it seems to me that there must be a vast difference between using your resources to put in motion Irish and French industry. Have not the French been gainers all this time, and the Irish losers, by your having employed French workmen? Might not the profits of Irish work-people in your service have become substantial capital by this time, if you had staid at home?"

"Ireland has been as busy working for me all this time, Rosso, as if I had staid at home: not these my near neighbours, perhaps, but labourers of one kind or another. My revenue must first be spent here before my agent can get it for me to spend anywhere else. The only difference is that I myself might spend it in Irish bread, fish, milk, linen, &c., while he lays out exactly its

equivalent in purchasing that which is to enable me to buy French bread, milk, fish, and linens; whether that which he purchases be labour and raw material united in a manufacture, or raw material which is the result of labour."

"But the plain question is, after all, Tracey, whether you would have employed French labour if you had lived at home?"

"I should not, except in as far as I live on French wines; of which you know I am very fond; but at the same time, I supersede a portion of French labour by the produce of Irish labour which I introduce into France. Neither should I have employed more Irish labour at home than when abroad. The amount of Irish commodities which I should have consumed at home is exchanged against French commodities; that is all. It seems to me, Rosso, that since you feel perplexed about this, you must have the idea that this exchange is not an exchange of equivalents. Is not that what you are thinking of? You should remember that an exchange which is advantageous to individuals on account of convenience, &c. is a mere exchange of equivalents as regards the country at large. The baker gains by exchanging some of his loaves for broad-cloth; but the same amount of wealth remains in the country as before. In like manner, it is a convenience to me to have my rents in money rather than cattle; but it is the same thing to Ireland whether I receive my revenue in the one form or the other."

"True: give me a case. Show me the effect

of sending your revenue to Paris through England."

"Very well. Suppose the state of the exchange, or anything else, renders it undesirable to send me money; my agent sends cattle into England to be exchanged for something more convenient to me. Well; Ireland is minus my year's consumption, just as if I had been there during the year. The cattle is exchanged for Sheffield and Manchester goods, which are to be sent to France. Thus England is in the same state as if I had remained in London, using nothing but hardware and cottons. France gains nothing by me, for I consume precisely as much food, clothing and habitation as I give of knives and ginghams. And the case would be the same if my rents travelled round the world."

"Is the outcry against absentees, then, so very senseless?"

"As far as regards the total wealth of a country, I certainly conceive it to be so, much as the residence of any one landlord may affect the locality where his capital resides. I may create a good deal of bustle about me by settling down here; but some other class of producers will have less to do than when I was abroad. Ireland is neither richer nor poorer for my return."

"Yet it is a common remark that bare fields and broken fences on the one hand, or thriving estates on the other, show at a glance whether the proprietor is an absentee or a resident."

"Aye: but we forget that the industry of the

resident proprietor's tenantry may be called into action by the wants of the absentee. Their produce finds its way to him through the market in the shape of bills of exchange which represent his revenue."

"Nothing can be clearer. I see it all now. The coin which the tenants pay purchases produce which is sent to the foreign country; and the bills of exchange drawn by the exporter, and made payable for the Irish produce exported, are the form in which the absentee receives his rent: so that Ireland sells one kind of produce to the foreign market instead of an equal value of other kinds to the absentee."

"Exactly so. Now, how can it signify to Ireland where he eats his beef, as long as he derives it from his own country?"

"It cannot signify to the country at large, certainly. You have confirmed me in the opinion I have long held of the injustice of an absentee tax, for which so many are clamouring."

"To be applied for the benefit of the poor, I suppose. It seems to me the last thing in the world likely to do any real good. You see the whole revenue of an absentee is first spent at home. Any part withdrawn as a tax would be so much diverted from its natural course, for the sake of being arbitrarily applied. It would only affect the distribution of capital, not its amount; and we all know that a natural distribution is more favourable to the welfare of a country than an arbitrary one.—As a stigma upon absentees, it would be unjust in a high degree; and as throwing

an unequal burden upon them, intolerably oppressive."

"One pretence is that absentees contribute nothing to our domestic taxes: but the objectors forget what taxes he is liable to as a proprietor of land and houses, and what he pays on the materials of manufactures."

"And if he ought to be still further liable, Rosso, let it be done in any way but that which assumes to repair an injury done to his country by his leaving her. There are many ways of levying a tax on income or property which would affect him; and thus let him pay, if his own government is jealous of his assisting to support that of France or of Italy; and if, moreover, it overlooks the stimulus given by the absentee to exchanges and manufactures. Suppose an absentee should ere long be honoured as a benefactor to his country."

"In Scotland the estates of absentees are considered in a better condition on the whole than those of residents; and the reverse is not always the case here, Tracey."

"Well: we will not decide the question any further than to agree that the prosperity of an estate depends mainly on the qualities of the manager, be he landlord or be he agent. As for the prevailing prejudice respecting absenteeism, it may be trusted to go straight forward into the gulf of oblivion, if we all help to point out its way thither. Pity it is too late to atone to a host of absentees for the undeserved censure which has been cast upon them."

"If undeserved: but, Tracey, do you suppose they have most of them thought much about their country's good before they left her?"

"God forbid that we should judge their motives!" said Tracey. "I answer for none but myself. I did thoroughly convince myself before I set out that I should not injure my country by going. Many, I doubt not, have been driven away by political wrongs, either directly inflicted on themselves, or inciting the peasantry to hostility against their landlords; and many more, probably, have hastened abroad to get out of sight of misery which they could not relieve. If I were to venture on judging my neighbour at all in these instances, it should not be the absentee, but the government; whose evil policy prompted to absenteeism."

"Well: instead of judging, let us anticipate, since the past cannot be helped, and the future may be bettered."

"That is what I try to comfort myself with saying," replied Tracey, looking round with a sigh on his half-ruined estate and ragged corps of labourers. "Let others try, like me, to remember the past only as a warning; and let government do with the country as I am doing with my little corner of it. Let capital be well secured and well husbanded, in order that it may circulate with more confidence and become more abundant. Let the people be more wisely distributed over the surface, and let their surplus be carried where labour is wanted. Let all usurpers of unjust authority, all who make the

law odious, and justice a mockery, be displaced from office as I have, displaced Flanagan. Above all, let education be abundantly given, so as to afford us hope that the people may in time understand that their interests are cared for; and that men who differ in religion and politics may find it possible to live in fellowship, like ourselves, friend Rosso."

"Like ourselves, friend Tracey," replied Rosso; "and then farewell to all Catholic oaths to wade knee-deep in Orange blood, and to all Protestant likenings of the pope and his flock to the devil and his crew."

Chapter VII.

IRISH IMPOLICY.

The friendship between these gentlemen proved of no little advantage to their neighbours when an occasion presently arose for their co-operation for the good of their parish.

News reached Mr. Rosso's ears one day that a strange gentleman was on a visit at the house of a Protestant in the next parish, who had a field or two in the glen, just advertised for sale. It was immediately conjectured that the gentleman came as a purchaser of this land; but it was not till it had been repeatedly surveyed and measured that any gossip could ascertain what he meant to do with it. In due time, however, it trans-

pired that the stranger was a builder, and that he was making his estimates for erecting a church.

Mr. Rosso's measures were immediately taken. He sent to the proper quarters memorials of the facts that he and his household, consisting of fifteen persons, were the only Protestants in the parish; that they stood in no need of a church, that of the neighbouring parish being nearer their dwelling than the field on which the new one was proposed to be erected; and that ecclesiastical burdens already weighed so heavily on a miserably poor population, that it would be absolute ruin to many to tax them further. Moreover, Mr. Rosso sent a pressing invitation to Mr. Orme, the incumbent, to take up his abode with him for a week. Mr. Orme had not appeared in his parish for some years; and there was hope that what he might now see would influence him to avert the dreadful infliction of a church where there were no church-goers. Mr. Tracey prepared Father Glenny for friendly intercourse with his heretic brother pastor; and all parties agreed that, if Mr. Orme should prove the reasonable and kind-hearted man he was reported to be, a further appeal should be made to him on the subject of his tithes.

Mr. Orme came, and, before he went to rest the first night, was convinced by ocular demonstration that his host's dining-room could conveniently contain the entire Protestant population of the parish. The next morning, he was seen standing with the priest on the ridge which overlooked

the glen, and heard to sigh over its aspect of desolation.

"Whereabouts would you have your church erected?" quietly asked Father Glenny.

"Indeed, I know little more than you," replied the clergyman. "I have not been consulted upon the matter in regular form, and had no idea it had gone so far. I fear it is a job, sir."

"The architect happens to have his hands empty of contracts at present, perhaps," observed the priest: "and the owner of the field may hope to gain a higher price for his land through the agency of your church than direct from our poor neighbours. But look round you, and find out, if you can, where the parish is to obtain means to answer such a call upon its resources."

"It is indeed a different place from what I once remember it, though it had never much wealth to boast of. When I occasionally lodged here, it was in farmhouses where there was good food and sufficient clothing, and sometimes a pretty dower for the daughters on their marriage day. I see no such places now. These hovels are but the ruins of them."

"Too true; and we preserve but the ruins of some of our former practices. Dowries are rare among the brides of this parish. Our old folks are less hopeful, our young ones less patient than formerly; and marriages are therefore rashly entered into without a provision of any kind."

"I am sorry, very sorry for it, sir. There is more benefit than is at once apparent in the long preparation of the marriage provision. I have

heard much ridicule of the old Scotch practice of accumulating a stock of linen for bed and board, which could scarcely be consumed in a lifetime; but there was much good in it. Besides the benefit to the parties concerned,—the industry and forethought it obliged them to exercise, and the resources it put in their power,—the custom proved an important check upon population. Young people had to wait two or three years before they married; and where this was universally the case, it was thought no hardship. Those who thus began their married life were never known to become paupers. But, sir, from the aspect of this place, I should imagine your entire flock to be paupers, except a tenant or two yonder."

"The land is exhausted, Mr. Orme, and the people are therefore poverty-stricken and reckless. There is little encouragement to prudence while there are superiors to keep a rapacious hand in every man's pocket, and appropriate whatever he may chance to gain beyond that which will support life. We know such to be the results in Turkey, Mr. Orme, and in other seats of despotic government, and why not here?"

"Whom do you point at as these superiors?" inquired Mr. Orme. "Not either of the landlords, surely. And you are free, moreover, from the locust-like devastation of the poor-law system."

"True: but what pauperism leaves, the middlemen consume; and what the middlemen leave,

the tithe-proctor consumes. Yonder field, sir, has been let out of tillage because the tithe devoured the profits. That row of hovels is deserted because your proctor seized all that rendered them habitable. Their inmates are gone where they may live by plunder, since the law of this district is to plunder or be plundered."

"Plundered!" exclaimed Mr. Orme. "That is a somewhat harsh term, sir."

"Is it an unjust one, Mr. Orme?—that is the question. What do these poor people gain in return for the portion of their earnings wrenched from them in the form of tithes? What does the Protestant church do for these Catholic tithe-payers?"

Mr. Orme could only reply that the Protestant church was established for the good of the people at large; and that it was the people's own fault if they would not take advantage of the ministrations of its clergy. He was ready, for one, to do duty as soon as his flock would listen to him; and, in the meanwhile, he conceived that he was causing no wrong to any man by receiving the means of subsistence decreed him by law. He would not defend the mode of payment by tithe in any country, or under any circumstances. He saw its evils as an impediment to improvements in agriculture, and as an unequal tax, falling the most heavily on the most industrious cultivator; but while payment by tithe was the method appointed by law, he could not allow that its exaction deserved the name of plunder."

"With or without law," observed Father Glenny, "it appears to me plunder to force payment for offered services, which are not only declined but regarded with dislike or contempt: in which light we know the services of the Protestant clergy are justly or unjustly regarded by our Catholic population. If you, sir, were a pastor in the Vaudois, and your flock under the dominion of some Catholic power, could you see one deprived of his only blanket, and another of his last loaf of bread, and a third of his sole portion of his field-crop, for the maintenance of a clergy whom they never saw, and not call it plunder, let the law stand as it might? And could you acknowledge your people to be justly charged with disaffection if they looked with an unfriendly eye on the priestly agent of this robbery, and muttered deep curses against his employer?"

No answer being returned, the priest invited his companion into certain of the dwellings near.

"To be looked on with an unfriendly eye?" asked Mr. Orme, smiling bitterly. "To be greeted with deep curses?"

"By no means, sir. I question whether an individual whom we shall meet will know the pastor of his parish. If you keep your own counsel, you may see things as they are. If you have courage, you may hear by what means your 400*l.* a-year has been levied."

"I will; on condition that you will allow me to speak as plainly to you on your relation to

the people as you have spoken on mine. Will you bear with my rebukes in your turn?"

"I will," replied the priest, "when I have finished my say. Do you conceive it just and merciful to Ireland that she should support four archbishoprics, and eighteen bishoprics, the total number of her Protestants being smaller than in certain single dioceses in England?"

"Certainly not. I have long advocated a reduction of our establishment. I would go so far as to make the four archbishoprics maintain the whole, which would strike off at once 100,000*l.* a-year from the revenues of the church. I would go farther, sir; and this will, I hope, prove to you that I am not one of the locust-tribe to which you would assign me. I would commute the tithes for lands, in order to avoid the individual oppression of which the people complain."

Father Glenny observed that he did not wonder the plan of commutation was rising into favour now that it was found impossible to collect tithes in the old method: but the nation might be found as impracticable respecting one mode of paying tithes as another; and he wished to know what was to be done in case of its declining the commutation proposed.

"The plan must be enforced," replied Mr. Orme; "and, moreover, the arrears must be recovered by the strong arm of the law."

"Whence can they be obtained?" asked Father Glenny. "How are you to compel the

cottier who consumes his scanty crop, season by season, to pay the collected tithe-dues of several? I say nothing of the danger to yourselves and your families,—danger to life and property, —of enforcing your claim. I say nothing now of the violence which must attend upon such an effort. I merely ask whence the arrears are to be obtained in an impoverished country?"

"They must be converted into a government debt. By this means, the nation will learn the real disposition of the government towards its own ecclesiastical servants and those who refuse them their lawful rights. By this means, the consent of my brethren at large to a commutation of tithes will be most easily obtained. Yes; the arrears of tithe must be converted into a government debt."

"By this means," replied the priest, "the burden will be imposed where it is not due. Our cottiers cannot pay; and you would therefore have their richer neighbours discharge their arrears:—a vicarious obligation of a new kind!—No! this will scarcely be tolerated, believe me. You will carry neither of your points;—neither the payment of arrears nor commutation; the people having discovered a method of evading the payment entirely. Better waive your claim altogether, Mr. Orme, while there is yet time to do it with a good grace, or you will have the same trouble about tithe cattle that multitudes of your brethren have. You will pound them in vain; attempt in vain to sell them; carry them

over the sea in vain; and find too late that all you have gained is the name of oppressor."

Mr. Orme muttered that it was a very hard case.

"Who can help it?" inquired the priest. "If the subsistence-fund was not ample enough to afford tithes when due, in a poor district like this, how should it discharge an accumulation of debt? Here we have many more people, very little more capital, less industry, less forethought than when the debt was contracted. All the constituents of the subsistence-fund have become more or less debased, and yet you would tax it more heavily than ever. You must fail in your object, sir."

"I will learn the truth for myself, instead of taking the assertion of any man whatever," replied Mr. Orme, moving onwards towards a cluster of dwellings, into which he was introduced as a friend by the priest, and not therefore suspected of being the clergyman of the parish. All that he heard told the same tale; all that he saw confirmed it. The new church was spoken of in terms of execration, in which the parson and the proctor largely shared. One woman told how the wealthy churchman was living far away from his cure, subsisting his dogs on the food snatched from her children's mouths; and another showed where her son lay buried, having been smitten with fever in consequence of his useless over-toil to satisfy the demands of the rapacious agents of the law. Others pointed with moody mirth to their desolated dwellings, as affording a sign that

the legal spoilers were not far off. Others observed that there would be few conversions to the Protestant faith in the parish, while the clergy snatched the loaves and fishes from the multitude instead of bestowing them. Yet more exhibited their uncomplaining poverty in their looks and dress rather than by words; and only gazed round their little tenements in perplexity at the mention of the dues that must be paid.

Mr. Orme had hitherto been a prejudiced man on the subject of his own rights; but he was open to conviction, and at length roused to ascertain the truth of his own case. He spent the whole of this day and the next in rendering himself acquainted with the condition of the people, and used no reserve with Father Glenny respecting the impression made upon his mind. Towards the conclusion of his investigation, he stopped short, and ended a long pause by exclaiming,

"I do not see how it is to be done! Setting aside all considerations of law and justice, I do not see the possibility of obtaining my dues from these poor people."

"Nor I, Mr. Orme. What follows this conviction in your mind?"

"I scarcely know yet, further than that I shall give up my claim altogether, if, after a little consideration, I view the matter as I do now."

"Then you will prove, as I expected, a faithful servant of your church; more heedful to her honour and usefulness than to your own peculiar gain."

"Reserve your praise, I advise you, sir, till

you have heard me out. By giving up my claim altogether, I mean only while the people are in their present state. When the subsistence-fund improves, when industry and forethought thrive, the people will be again in a condition to pay tithe, and will perhaps," he added, smiling, "be my own flock, in allegiance as well as by destination, if Mr. Rosso and you continue your care of the school."

"I will try the venture with you," replied the priest, smiling also. "Let our respective faiths be tried by the increasing light of the people. If this is also your wish, you will dispossess my flock of the prejudices they entertain against your church on account of her oppressions."

"This reminds me," said Mr. Orme, "of what I have to say against your relations with your flock. How do you defend your own emoluments while you complain of mine?"

Father Glenny, astonished, began to explain that he derived from his flock little more than would barely supply his wants. A hard couch, a frugal board, homely clothing, left him but a pittance with which to relieve the most pressing distress he encountered.

"Of all this I am aware," replied Mr. Orme. "In these respects your lot resembles that of too many faithful servants of our church, who give their most strenuous exertions for a very poor worldly return. What I now complain of is not the amount of your recompense, but the mode in which it is levied. How can you in one hour lament those evils of the people's state which

arise from the disproportion of their numbers to their means of subsistence, and in the next, consent to receive your emoluments in a way which exposes you to the charge of encouraging an increase of numbers?"

"The charge is false," replied the priest. "My brethren and I do not make marriages, though we celebrate them with a view to the glory of God and the fulfilment of his holy commandment. We are supposed to know nothing of an intended marriage till requested to solemnize it; and to refuse to discharge our office, with all the customs appertaining to it, would be to encourage sin."

"I lay no charge to the door of any one man among you," replied Mr. Orme. "I only observe that by receiving your emoluments chiefly in the shape of marriage fees, you expose yourselves to the suspicion of encouraging marriage; a suspicion which is much strengthened by your emphatic approbation of such connexions as often as you solemnize them, and by your known tremendous power over the minds of your flocks, obtained through the practice of confession. Hear me out, my good sir. I am not about to enter upon any controversy respecting the diversities in our discharge of the clerical office. I would only recommend to you, if you wish to place yourselves above the suspicion I have alluded to, to separate your worldly interest altogether from this particular rite. Appoint any other way you may choose of receiving your dues; but if you really believe your people to be prone to form imprudent marriages, if you are actually

convinced that over-population is a principal cause of their distresses, remove from yourselves all temptation to connive at imprudent marriages and to sanction over-population: remove from the minds of your people all idea that they are gratifying and rewarding you by asking you to marry them; cancel every relation between the wedding propensities of the young and the welfare of their priest's purse."

"I agree with you," replied the priest, "that there is much that is objectionable in the modes in which we each receive our emoluments. You condemn tithes, and I condemn marriage fees, given as they are given now by the guests as well as the parties. The fee thus exposes us to the temptation and suspicion you speak of, without having the beneficial effect of obliging the young couple to save before they marry, like the Scotch ancient custom respecting house linen. It is for the state to remedy this evil by providing otherwise for us."

Mr. Orme thought this was jumping to a conclusion in a terrible hurry. Why should not the same amount be given in a more judicious manner by the flock, instead of involving government at all in the matter? This point was argued till both gentlemen decided that the only method by which the permanent prosperity of the people could be secured was the general diffusion of such knowledge as would make them judges of their own condition and controllers of their own destinies. The Protestant and Catholic perfectly agreed that to further the grand object of edu-

cation, it was worth while to concede certain points which elsewhere each would have strenuously insisted on; and that, should an impartial plan of general education be framed by government, it would be the duty, and would probably appear to be the disposition of all but a small minority of the factious and bigoted, to render hearty thanks for the boon, and all possible assistance towards the efficient working of the scheme.

"If this should be done speedily," observed the Protestant, "I may live to be called hither to receive my dues in recompense of the services which I would fain render now, if the people would but receive them."

"If this be done speedily," observed the Catholic, "my brethren and I may live to see ourselves and our flocks no longer looked down upon by our scornful neighbours of your church as constituting a degraded caste. The law has at length emancipated us from our civil disabilities: it remains for education to lift us out of that worse and equally undeserved degradation whence the law cannot raise us up."

The result of Mr. Orme's survey of his parish, —made known after long deliberation on his part, much consultation with Mr. Rosso, and intimate intercourse with the people,—was, that he relinquished altogether his claim for tithes for the present, on the ground that it was impossible for the people to pay them.

All the endeavours of Father Glenny and his enlightened neighbours to make the people grate-

ful for this concession were in vain. When they heard of the changes made by Mr. Orme's family in their way of living, of the luxuries they surrendered, and the frugality they were obliged to exercise, the only remark was that these things had been fraudulently enjoyed thus long, as the nominal reward of services which had never been rendered. When reminded that the remission was an act of free grace on Mr. Orme's part, they replied "Thank him for nothing. He would never have got another pound of tithe in this parish, as he probably knows. He gives up only what he could not touch."

When he rode away, ready to bestow kind looks on every side, he only met dubious smiles from those who gazed after him from field and cabin, and who observed to one another that it was a great blessing to have one priest for a guide, but rather too much to have another and a strange one on their backs. To wish him well away was the utmost extent of their courtesy.

From another quarter, however, Mr. Orme had thanks. The three gentlemen whom he left behind considered themselves beholden to him for the absence of the tumultuous excitement which elsewhere attended the useless endeavour to exact tithes. This parish was saved all opposition of forces between the "loyal" and the "disaffected;" that is, between the oppressors and the oppressed. There was no need to cry out for the Insurrection Act on the one hand, or to threaten or perpetrate mischief on the other. The architect was seen no more. The field

which he had surveyed bore oats instead of a church,—a happy circumstance; since the people were much in want of food for the body, while they had enough of that for the spirit, and of the kind which they preferred, in Mr. Tracey's chapel.

Chapter VIII.

IRISH FATALITY.

Dora was long in gaol before she could form an idea what was to become of her. The place was crowded, in consequence of the late disorders in her native district; and her child pined for want of the bracing air to which it had been accustomed from its birth. Night after night when she was kept awake by its wailing, day after day when she marked how its little limbs wasted, did the mother sigh to be one of those whose lot she had till now thought very wretched. She would fain have been among such as were driven from the glen to seek a subsistence in the towns, begging by day, and nestling wherever they could find a hole by night. When she was brought into the town, she met several of these, whose faces she well knew, changed as they were from the cheerful or thoughtful countenances of dwellers in a home to the listless or bold expression which characterises vagrants. She now envied them their freedom, however mournful their condition

in other respects. They might carry their babes abroad into the free air, and if too much crowded in their noisome abodes, sleep under the open sky. They might meet their proscribed connexions, if such they had, without other restraints than their own prudence imposed: while she must see her infant languish for want of that which nature designed for all; and live on from day to day without hope of beholding husband or father, or of knowing what had become of them.

The first relief she found was in forming a desperate resolution respecting her infant. She had passed a long, wakeful night in such a state of distress as even she had seldom known. The heat was stifling, from many sleepers being collected within a small space. Her child would not lie still on her bosom one moment. Sometimes screaming, sometimes wailing, its signs of suffering wrung its mother's heart. She was first irritated and then terrified by the complaints of all who were disturbed like herself, and who seemed to think it her fault that the child would not rest. Hour after hour was she kept on the stretch, watching for tokens of fatigue from the child, or of mercy from her neighbours; but the heat increased, fresh cries wore her nerves, and new threats of getting rid of the nuisance made her feel as if every pulse in her body would burst. She threw herself down on her pallet, on the side of which she had been sitting, and closed her eyes and ears, muttering—

"God help me! and take me and my child where we may sleep in peace and no waking.

My mind is just going as it did one night before; and let it go, if my child was but safe with its father. Little would it matter then what became of me; for Dan and I shall never meet more. O! hush, my child! hush! I could part with you for ever if I could only ease you from wailing, and from this sore strife. There is a curse upon me, and upon you while you live on my bosom. You never caress me, my child; you struggle out of my grasp! Other babes clasp their mothers, but you push me away. Well you may! God gave you free and strong limbs and an easy breath; and 'tis I that have laid a withering curse on your flesh, and a heavy load on your little breast. 'Tis I that have dropped poison in your veins. You shall go, my child. I will bear to be haunted all my days with your screams and your throes; I will bear to lie down without you, and wake, feeling for you in vain; I will bear to fold my empty arms when I see babes laughing in the sunshine, and wonder whether you are playing on the sod or lying beneath it,—if I can free you from my curse, and trust your little life to those who can nourish it better than I. O hush! my child. Bear with me this last night! If I could but see you but once more quiet, if you would only once lay your little hand on my lips, if you would but look at me!—Again, again, again! your life will be spent, my child; you will die before I can save you!—O, neighbours! do ye think it's my will that my child should suffer this way? Do you think its cries do not pierce my ears more than yours? Is it worse

for you to lose a night's sleep than for me to be parting with my child for ever?"

The softened grumblers inquired the meaning of her words, and praised her for intending to send the babe out of the gaol immediately, only complaining that it had not been done long before. All were ready to help her with suggestions how to dispose of it; none of which suggestions, however, satisfied her.

All difficulty on this head was removed the next day by the appearance of Father Glenny, who came, as he had done once or twice before, to administer to the religious wants of several of his flock who had found their way hither. He was shocked at the change in Dora since he last saw her, and thought the child dying. He engaged at once to have it carried out of the prison and conveyed into safe hands. Whose hands these were, he could not disclose, as Sullivan's retreat was made known to him under the seal of confession, and the circumstances must not be revealed even to the old man's only child. Of Dan the priest had heard nothing. No one had seen or heard of him since some days previous to Dora's capture.

The only thing which struck the priest as remarkable in Dora's state of mind was her utter indifference respecting her approaching trial. It seemed never to occur to her; and when she was reminded of it, it appeared to be regarded as a slight and necessary form preliminary to her going away for ever. She never took in the idea of acquittal, or remembered that she had a part

to perform, and that she was one of two contending parties, with either of whom success might rest. She made no complaints of being a passive instrument in the hand of power, or of any hardship in the treatment she had experienced or was still to bear. She made no preparation of her thoughts for defence or for endurance. She was utterly unmindful of what was coming, taking for granted that she should never more see her husband, and beyond this, having no thought where she was to spend her days, or how she was to end them. This state appeared so unnatural, that the priest, after enlarging in vain on her accusation and means of defence, ventured to rouse her by mentioning a report he had heard that an attempt was to be made to rescue her and her companions by breaking the gaol before the trials, or by attacking the guard which should conduct some to the gibbet and others to the coast, when their doom was to be enforced. For a moment a gleam of hope kindled in her eyes; but she immediately observed that if the report was abroad, the magistrates were no doubt on their guard, and the white-boys would ascertain the attempt to be vain before they committed themselves. After this, however, it was observed that she could recollect nothing. She had nothing to confess, nothing to ask for, no messages to leave, no desires to express. With a dull, drowsy expression of countenance, she looked at the priest when he rose to leave her, and seemed to ask why he stood waiting.

"Your child, my daughter," said he, extending his arms to receive the babe.

With a start and a flushed cheek, she hastened to wrap it in the only garment of her own which she could spare to add to its scanty clothing. After a cold kiss, she placed it in the arms of its new guardian, saying with a stiff smile,

"I wonder whether there are any more such mothers as I am! I forget all about my child's coming to me, and I don't think I care much about its going from me. I'm past caring about any thing at times."

"And at other times, daughter——"

"Hush, hush, hush! don't speak of them now. Well; there have been widowed wives and childless mothers; and I am only one more; and what is to come is dark to us all, except that there is death for everybody.—No blessing, father, to-day! It has never done me any good, and I cannot bear it. Try it upon that little one, if you like.'

As soon as the priest was gone, muttering amidst his tears the blessing to which she would not listen, Dora threw herself down on her pallet and instantly slept. She scarcely woke again till called up, eight and forty hours after, to prepare for trial.

Sleep had restored her to perfect sanity, and a full and deep consciousness of her misery. A demeanour of more settled sorrow, a countenance more intensely expressive of anguish, were never seen in that or any other court. She was silent

from first to last, except when called upon for the few necessary words which her counsel could not say for her. Though deeply attentive to the proceedings, she appeared to sustain no conflict of hope and fear. In her mind it was evident that the whole matter was settled from the beginning.

She had all that law and justice, the justice of a law court, could give her. Her countrymen must still wait for the more enlightened law, the more effectual justice whose office is rather to obviate than to punish crime: but all that pertains to law and justice, after the perpetration of crime, Dora had, both in the way of defence and infliction. She had good counsel, an impartial jury, a patient and compassionate judge. She was accordingly fairly tried and condemned to transportation for life, on the first charge; the second was waived as unnecessary, the issue of the first being a conviction.

As the condemned was leaving the court, she heard (for on this day nothing escaped her) the lamentations of one who had known her from her infancy, over her having had an education. "If she had never been taught to write," urged her sage neighbour, "this murtherous letter could never have been brought against her." To which some one replied that she would still have been convicted of perjury.

"Is there no language to threaten in," asked Dora, speaking rapidly as she passed, "but that which is spelled by letters? Overthrow every school in the country, empty all your ink into the

sea, make a great fire of all your paper, and you will still find threats inscribed wherever there is oppression. There will be pictures traced in the sands of the sea-shore; there will be pikes stuck up on each side the doors; there will be mock gibbets for signals, and a multitude of scowling brows for warnings. Let those who are above us look within themselves, and as sure as they find these traces of tyrannical desires, will they see round about them marks of revengeful plots, though the people under them may be as brutish in their ignorance as slaves in their bondage. When do prosperous men plot, or contented men threaten, or those who are secure perjure themselves, or the well-governed think of treachery? Who believes that conspiracy was born in our schools instead of on our cold hearths, or that violence is natural to any hands but those from which their occupation and their subsistence are wrenched together? The school in which my husband and I learned rebellion was the bleak rock, where famine came to be our teacher. A grim set of scholars she had——"

"What is the prisoner talking about?" cried a potential voice from behind. "Remove her, officer!"

Chapter IX.

IRISH DISAFFECTION.

The rumour of the intention of the whiteboys to break the gaol, or otherwise rescue the prisoners, was unfounded. Since the new works were begun on Mr. Tracey's estate, the numbers of the disaffected in the district had lessened considerably, and those who remained were for the most part employed on distant expeditions. Dan had been out of his own neighbourhood so long that he heard of Dora's capture only a few days before her trial, his father-in-law having failed in his attempt to give him immediate intelligence of the event. The exasperated husband vowed, as soon as he learned her sentence, to move heaven and earth to rescue her; and all that one man could do to this end he did: but he was not heartily seconded by his companions; they considering the attempt too hazardous for their present force, and not seeing that this case required their interference more than many which were presented to their observation every day. If their attempt had been agreed upon and planned ever so wisely, it would have been baffled by the fears of the magistrates, who, alarmed by the rumours afloat, determined to send the convicts round by sea to the port where the convict-ship awaited them, instead of having them traverse the island. A small vessel was secretly engaged to wait off the coast at the nearest point, to receive

the convicts, before it should be known that they had left the gaol.

Father Glenny, who was aware of the scheme, and therefore prepared to make his parting visit at the right time to the unhappy outcasts from his flock, repaired to Mr. Tracey's when his painful duty was done, dispirited, and eager for some relief from the harrowing thoughts which the various interviews had left behind. Mr. Tracey invited him to inspect the works, and see what had been done thereby for the estate and for the people. They rode to the shore just as the labourers were leaving work, and at the proper time for conversing with some of them respecting their prospects, and the hopes and views with which they were about to begin life in another land. An ardent desire to emigrate was found to prevail: a desire arising out of hatred to middlemen and tithe-proctors, discontent with as much as they knew of the law, and despair of permanently improving their condition at home. They acknowledged their landlord's justice in enabling them to remove advantageously, smiled at the victory over Mr. Orme, on which they prided themselves as a grand parting achievement, and spoke with gratitude of the kindness of Mr. Rosso's family during their time of sore distress; but the only person among their superiors in whom they seemed to place implicit confidence was Father Glenny. To him they said little of the barrier which they believed to separate the rich and the poor in Ireland: on him no man among them looked with an evil eye; against him were directed

no remarks that there was one sort of justice for the powerful and another for the helpless. Their affection being strong in proportion as it was concentrated, they almost adored their priest, and swore that when their wives and children should have followed them abroad, Father Glenny would be the only tie to their native district which they would be unwilling to break.

"How different an embarkation will theirs be!" he observed to his companion, when he had given his blessing and passed on along the ridge of the cliff. "How different a departure from that of their brethren who are sent away as criminals! Here, the husband goes in hope of soon welcoming his family to a home of better promise than they leave; there a wife is carried away alone, in disgrace, severed for ever from her husband and her child. It makes one thoughtful to consider that the least painful of these departures might possibly have been rendered unnecessary by a wiser social management; but, as for the the other, we ought to kneel in the dust, crying for mercy, till Heaven shall please to remove from us the scourge of crime, and the heart-withering despair which follows it. If you had seen and heard what I have seen and heard this day, you would tremble at the retribution which is sent upon the people and their rulers. Let us pray day and night to avert it!"

"And in the intervals of our prayers, father, let us exert ourselves to avert it by removing the abuses from which it springs. Instead of applying palliatives, let us go to the root of the evil.

Instead of providing a legal relief for our poor, which must in time become a greater burden than we now labour under, we must remove the weights which oppress their industry, guard against the petty tyranny under which they suffer, and all the while, persevere in educating, and still educating, till they shall be able to assist our reforms; to understand the law beneath which they live; instead of defying it, to respect the government (by that time more efficient to secure the objects at which it aims); and to act upon the belief that men of various creeds and ranks and offices may dwell together without enmity. May not all this come of education, coupled with political reforms, and sanctioned by the blessing we pray for?"

"Heaven grant it may!" exclaimed the priest, who was now attentively observing some one who was sitting on the sunny side of a fence which ran to the very verge of the rock. It was an old man, with a babe on his knee, to whom he was alternately talking and singing in a feeble, cracked voice. His song was of the sea, to which he looked perpetually, and over which the setting sun was trailing a long line of glistering gold, to the great delight of the infant as well as its guardian.

"It is Sullivan!" exclaimed the priest, "and it is poor Dora's child that he holds on his knee. True it is that God feeds the young ravens that cry. Yonder babe has thriven in this desert as if its nightly rest were on its mother's bosom. The old man, too, looks cheerily. You will not

take advantage, my son, of his having ventured above ground in a still hour like this. You will not bid the law take its course on one whose gray hairs came before his crimes began ?"

"Not for the world," said Tracey. "Shall we alight and speak to him, or would it alarm him too much ?"

They drew near while still unobserved by the old man, whose noisy sport hindered his hearing their footsteps. At this moment, a small vessel appeared from behind a projecting rock, her sails filled with a fresh north wind, and appearing of a snowy whiteness as they caught the sunlight. When she shot across the golden track, the babe sprang and crowed in the old man's arms.

"The saints' blessing on ye, my jewel!" cried he, in almost equal glee. "It's there you would be, dancing on the blue waves, instead of in my old arms, that will scarcely hold you in more than an unbroken colt, my pretty one! There she goes, my darling,

> Full of boys so frisky
> With the sweet-smelling whiskey,
> Flying over seas and far away;
> Good luck go with 'em——"

"Sullivan!" cried the priest, who could no longer endure this ill-timed mirth.

The old man scrambled up in a moment, and made his obeisance before the mournful gravity of his pastor.

"Sullivan!" continued Father Glenny, "Do you know that vessel? You cannot be aware what freight it bears! You——"

"I know now all about it," replied the old man, pettishly. "How could your reverençe expect my old eyes to see so far off what ship Dora was on board of? And what makes your reverence bring his honour to be a spy on an old man's disgrace, unless he comes to catch me, and send me after Dora? 'Tis near the hour when foxes and justices come out after their prey. You may have me for the catching, your honour; and much good may it do you to have got me."

He would not listen to a word Mr. Tracey had to say, but went on addressing the child, as if no one had been present, his glee being, however, all turned to bitterness.

"Agh, my jewel! and you knew more nor I, while you sprung as a lamb does when the ewe bleats. Stretch your arms, my darling, for your mother is there; and fain would I bid ye begone to her, though it would leave me alone in the wide world, where there's not a thing my eyes love but you, babby dear!"

And so he went on, sitting doggedly down with his back to the gentlemen, who retreated, intending to come again the next day, when he might be in a more communicative mood. At some distance they looked once more behind them, and saw that another man had joined Sullivan, and was standing over him, pointing to the receding vessel.

"It is Dan!" cried the priest, quickly turning his horse and riding back. Before he could reach the spot, Dan had snatched a hasty kiss of his infant, and disappeared. The old man's

countenance was now fallen, and his tone subdued.

"You will never see Dan more," said he, "though you may hear much of him. The just and merciful will never see his face again, and he has forsworn his priest. Where he will show himself from this time, it will be in the dead of the night, with a crape on his face and a pike in his hand. They that have made him mad must put up with a madman's deeds."

"Mad!" cried Tracey.

"He means exasperated," replied the priest. "Dan hoped to the last to rescue his wife, and the failure has made him desperate."

"I'm alone now in the world entirely," muttered Sullivan, rocking the now wearied infant to sleep. "Barring this orphan's, I shall see little of the face of man. It was the face of a devil that bent over us just now. Long may it be before it scares us again."

Sullivan said truly, that Dan would henceforth be heard of and not seen by any but the victims of his violence. He who was once the pride is now the scourge of the Glen of the Echoes.

Summary of Principles illustrated in this Volume.

WHATEVER affects the security of property, or intercepts the due reward of labour, impairs the subsistence-fund by discouraging industry and forethought.

Partnership tenantcies affect the security of property by rendering one tenant answerable for the obligations of all his partners, while he has no control over the management of their portions.

A gradation of landlords on one estate has the same effect, by rendering one tenant liable to the claims of more than one landlord.

The levying of fines on a whole district for an illegal practice going on in one part of it, has the same effect, by rendering the honest man liable for the malpractices of the knave.

The imposition of a church establishment on those who already support another church, intercepts the due reward of labour, by taking from the labourer a portion of his earnings for an object from which he derives no benefit.

The practice of letting land to the highest bidder, without regard to former service or to the merits of the applicants, intercepts the due reward of the labourer, by decreeing his gains to expire with his lease.

All these practices having prevailed in Ireland, her subsistence-fund is proportionably impaired,

though the reduction is somewhat more than compensated by the natural growth of capital.

While capital has been growing much more slowly than it ought, population has been increasing much more rapidly than the circumstances of the country have warranted: the consequences of which are, extensive and appalling indigence, and a wide spread of the moral evils which attend it.

An immediate palliation of this indigence would be the result of introducing a legal pauper-system into Ireland; but it would be at the expense of an incalculable permanent increase of the evil.

To levy a poor-rate on the country at large would be impolitic, since it would only increase the primary grievance of an insufficiency of capital, by causing a further unproductive consumption of it.

To throw the burden of a pauper system on absentees would be especially unjust, since they bear precisely the same relation to the wealth of their country as its resident capitalists.

In the case of Ireland, as in all analogous cases, permanent relief can be effected only by adjusting the proportions of capital and population: and this must be attempted by means suited to her peculiar circumstances.

The growth of capital should be aided by improvements in agricultural and domestic economy, and by the removal of political grievances; from which would follow a union in place of an opposition of interests.

LONDON:
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES,
Stamford Street.

00027573

R

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016